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Consumer Behavior in the Digital Ecosystem: Its Implications for Customer Loyalty at Bonbin Public Coffee Shop in Tulungagung

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of the coffee shop business in Tulungagung has sparked intense competition, with the digital ecosystem now actively shaping the behavior of younger consumers—shifting their focus from mere functional needs to a contemporary lifestyle. This study aims to comprehensively analyze consumer behavior characteristics within the digital ecosystem and examine their implications for building customer loyalty at Bonbin Public Coffee Shop. This descriptive qualitative study employs a single-case study approach. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with active customers and field observations, while secondary data were gathered through reviews and digital documentation on social media. Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions using triangulation techniques to ensure data validity. The results indicate that the integration of owned media and user-generated content on TikTok and Instagram successfully triggered viral trends and a “Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO) tendency, which drove initial visit decisions. However, there is a functional gap between digital expectations and operational realities on the ground. A surge in visits during peak hours triggers operational capacity constraints, such as limited glassware inventory—which degrades visual aesthetics and product presentation—as well as fluctuations in comfort due to the noisy atmosphere at night. In conclusion, popularity driven by a digital ecosystem is highly effective for initial customer acquisition, but long-term customer loyalty tends to be fragile if not supported by consistent product quality, a comfortable atmosphere, and tangible operational readiness on the ground.

INTRODUCTION

Coffee shops in Indonesia have grown rapidly in recent years; in 2016, there were approximately 1,000 coffee shops in Indonesia, and this number surged to about 2,950 by 2019 nationwide [1]. This growth in coffee shops is closely tied to the role of the younger generation—particularly Millennials and Generation Z—who view coffee shops not just as places to drink coffee but also as a second home where they can work, do homework, hang out, and embrace a certain lifestyle. Out of the total 40% of their allowance spent on food and beverages, young people set aside about 3 to 6 percent specifically for visiting coffee shops [2].

Digital transformation has changed how consumers evaluate and choose where to go, with social media content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok now playing a significant role in influencing decisions to visit a coffee shop—especially when the content is consistent, relevant, and visually appealing [3]. This shift has led modern coffee shops to operate within a digital ecosystem, where consistent exposure to viral content triggers a sense of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)—the urge to follow trends so as not to feel left behind [4]. This phenomenon is also evident among teenage coffee shop patrons, who tend to prioritize trends over functional needs [5]. poses a challenge to business sustainability, as it remains unclear to what extent consumer behavior driven by digital trends may impact

long-term customer loyalty. Therefore, an in-depth study of a specific case that represents this phenomenon is necessary.

The rise of coffee shops as alternative social spaces outside the home and workplace is also evident in medium-sized cities like Tulungagung [6]. Here, the digital ecosystem in question is not merely a marketing tool but a space that actively shapes the behavior of the younger generation through constant exposure to visual trends. Several previous studies have yielded differing findings regarding the factors influencing customer loyalty in coffee shops. Rasmikayati et al. found that the primary factors driving customer loyalty are price and ambiance [7]. Meanwhile, the findings of Ali and Melinda indicate that ambiance is not influenced by price [8]. The research results from Lestari & Karsiningsih suggest that lifestyle has a greater influence [9]. Marzuqi & Fardani added that the shop's atmosphere and customer experience influence Gen Z satisfaction by up to 62.4% [2]. These differing findings indicate that loyalty factors are highly dependent on context and environmental conditions; however, in Tulungagung, no study has specifically examined how the digital ecosystem impacts customer loyalty at a representative location.

This study was designed to fill this gap by employing a qualitative method in the form of a descriptive case study focused on a specific subject: Bonbin Public, a contemporary coffee shop that has experienced rapid growth through the utilization of the digital ecosystem. This study aims to analyze the characteristics of consumer behavior within the digital ecosystem and comprehensively examine its implications for the development of customer loyalty at Bonbin Public. The findings of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the study of digital consumer behavior as well as practical implications for creative industry stakeholders in medium-sized cities seeking to maintain customer retention amid intense competition.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a method conducted through the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. The type of research used is a case study, a qualitative research method suitable for addressing research questions related to how or why a phenomenon occurs [10]. In this study, a single-case study approach was used because it aims to explore in depth and within context the phenomenon of consumer behavior in the digital ecosystem and its implications for customer loyalty at a specific location, namely the Bonbin Public Coffee Shop in Tulungagung.

The data in this study were sourced from both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants—active customers of Bonbin Public—conducted in a structured manner to ensure the informants provided answers consistent with their experiences, as well as through direct observation of consumer behavior at the research site. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through digital documentation in the form of social media content analysis and digital reviews related to Bonbin Public, including Instagram and TikTok posts featuring customer interactions, to supplement the findings from the primary data.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [11]. The data reduction stage was conducted to simplify and focus the data obtained from interviews and observations before systematically presenting it in the form of descriptive narratives to reveal patterns of consumer behavior; preliminary conclusions were then drawn and continuously verified throughout the research process. The validity and reliability of the data in this study are ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation—that is, by comparing information across informants and cross-referencing the results of interviews, observations, and digital documentation—so that the objectivity and depth of the analysis can be methodologically justified.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interview Results with Devita

The interview was conducted with Devita Oktavia Ramadhani, a 21-year-old college student with an average monthly allowance of around Rp400,000. Devita is a fairly regular visitor to Bonbin, so she was able to provide a fairly representative picture of the customer experience at the coffee shop. The interview findings regarding product quality indicate that the food and beverage menu at Bonbin Public is quite diverse, offering visitors plenty of choices. Devita found the flavors to meet her expectations; she was not disappointed, even after visiting several times. The presentation of the food and drinks is also appealing, which she believes adds extra value to the experience of enjoying her order. She emphasized that the quality of the food and drinks she experienced tends to be consistent on every visit, so she doesn't hesitate to order the same items on her next visit. Given this consistency, Devita noted that the staff at Bonbin Public are friendly and polite every time she visits. The staff's friendliness is one of the things that makes her feel comfortable while at the coffee shop. She also added that the staff are quick to respond to customer feedback and suggestions, which, to her, shows that the coffee shop is open to input and serious about improving the quality of its service.

According to Devita, the quality of the products and service is commensurate with the prices set. She considers the prices at Bonbin Public to be affordable for everyone, including students with limited spending money like herself, and the portion sizes are appropriate for the price paid. This value is further emphasized by bundled offers like the Ramadan Package, which aligns with social media content in terms of both price and taste. Because she feels the price paid is worth the experience gained, Devita even admits she's willing to spend a little extra to return to Bonbin Public.

That comfort doesn't just come from the products and prices, but also from the atmosphere of the place itself. Devita finds Bonbin Public's decor and interior design appealing and in line with the tastes of the younger generation, especially with the abundance of aesthetic photo spots available to support visitors' social media needs. The atmosphere created makes this place versatile for various purposes—whether for relaxing, working on assignments, or gathering with family or friends. This comfort is further enhanced by lighting and background music tailored to her preferences, as well as the consistently maintained cleanliness of the venue. It is the combination of all these factors that ultimately makes Devita feel at home and willing to spend hours at Bonbin Public.

Devita's interest in Bonbin Public stems from how she first discovered the place—through a TikTok video that was trending among her friends, coupled with a recommendation from a friend who had already visited. She admits she was drawn in by the aesthetically pleasing social media content, which sparked her curiosity to experience it for herself. From that point on, her habit of visiting took shape; she always comes with a friend because she's never been there alone. Interestingly, Devita—who has over five thousand Instagram followers—uses Bonbin Public not only as a place to work from a café but also as a backdrop for her social media content, so her visits are also driven by the need for an Instagrammable spot. This positive experience ultimately fostered her loyalty to Bonbin Public. Devita said she's willing to visit again in the future and intends to recommend this place to others. However, she remains open to other options, so she doesn't consider Bonbin Public her go-to coffee shop and is open to trying new places she finds more appealing. Despite this openness, overall, Devita remains satisfied with her experience visiting Bonbin Public.

Interview Results with Arimbi

The next interview was conducted with Arimbi, a 19-year-old student with an average monthly allowance of around Rp1,000,000, who is a resident of Tulungagung Regency and has made several repeat visits to Bonbin Public. As an active customer, Arimbi's assessment offers a perspective quite different from that of the previous informant, as she represents the viewpoint of students with a more diverse range of visit experiences. The interview findings regarding product quality indicate that the food and beverage menu at Bonbin Public is diverse, offering visitors plenty of options to try. The presentation of the food and drinks was also considered attractive, though in terms of taste, she found them to be standard—meeting expectations but not exceptional. Regarding consistency, Arimbi noted that the food tends to be consistent on every visit, while the drinks are not always consistent in terms of packaging. She even experienced this firsthand during a visit at a busy time: the supply of glass cups, which are usually used, ran out, so her drink was served in a plastic cup, making the portion seem smaller even though the taste remained the same. This experience stood out to her regarding the consistency of service at Bonbin Public, especially when the café is crowded with visitors.

According to Arimbi, Bonbin Public's staff are quite quick to respond to customer feedback and suggestions, so she feels the café is fairly open to input. However, she noted that not all staff members are friendly and polite; in her view, some tend to be quiet and uncommunicative when serving customers, resulting in a service experience that isn't always consistent across her visits. Arimbi, who is a student, also touched on the issue of pricing, which she considers very affordable for a student's budget, with the portions of food and drinks feeling appropriate for the price paid. She also found that special bundles like the Ramadan Package met her expectations, both in terms of affordable pricing and the taste of the menu items, which she found delicious. It is this balance between price and the experience she receives that makes Arimbi say she's more than willing to spend a little extra to return to Bonbin Public in the future.

In contrast to her assessment of the prices, Arimbi actually finds Bonbin Public's decor and interior design to be rather ordinary compared to other coffee shops, though she does acknowledge that there are plenty of photo spots available for visitors' social media needs. In her opinion, the comfort of this place depends heavily on the time of visit: in the morning, it's still quiet, making it ideal for relaxing or getting work done, while at night it becomes much more crowded and noisy, making it less comfortable—especially for working. Despite these differences in atmosphere between times of day, Arimbi still finds the place comfortable for gathering or dining with family or friends, with lighting and background music that suit her preferences and cleanliness that's always well-maintained—so she admits she feels incredibly at home and is more than happy to spend a long time at Bonbin Public.

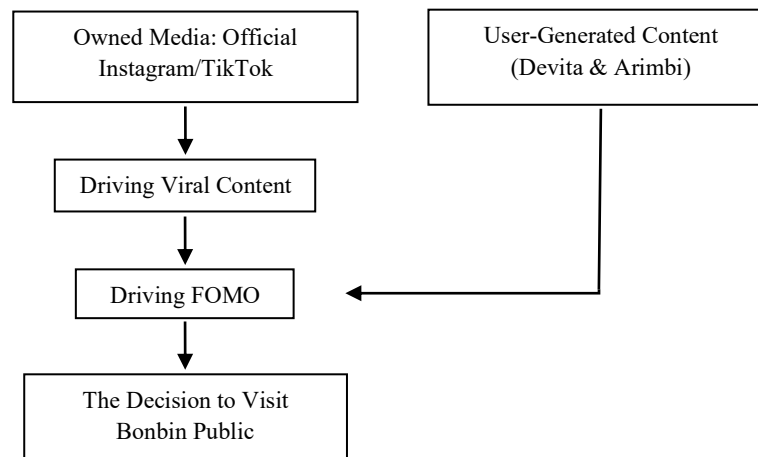
Arimbi's interest in Bonbin Public itself began with TikTok content she saw on social media. Her interest arose purely from exposure to that content, without any prior invitation or recommendation from people close to her. Since then, her visiting habits have taken shape; she admits she has never come alone and always visits with friends, with the main purpose of hanging out together. Although she noted inconsistencies in the preparation of drinks and the unfriendly attitude of some staff members, Arimbi still expressed a willingness to return to Bonbin Public at a later time. She even admitted that she prefers Bonbin Public over other coffee shops and

stated that she would continue to return even if new, attractive coffee shops were to open. However, she admitted she had never recommended Bonbin Public to anyone else. Regardless, overall, Arimbi remained satisfied with her experience visiting Bonbin Public.

Consumer Behavior in Choosing a Coffee Shop

The digital ecosystem is no longer viewed merely as a one-way marketing tool, but has become an active digital space (cyber-social space) that constantly guides, shapes, and changes the behavior of the younger generation of consumers in Tulungagung. Based on the research findings, the digital ecosystem surrounding Bonbin Public Coffee Shop is built on two main pillars: owned media (official content managed by the management) and user-generated content (organic content voluntarily produced by consumers) derived from their experiences visiting the coffee shop and subsequently posting on their social media platforms, such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, each with different objectives.

The integration of these two pillars creates massive and stimulating visual exposure that significantly influences the decision to visit. As both informants' accounts illustrate, this exposure operates independently of interpersonal recommendation, positioning viral content itself as the primary gateway through which Bonbin Public reaches potential customers.



The digital ecosystem cultivated by Bonbin Public is reinforced by consumers acting as micro-influencers, as demonstrated by informant Devita, who has over five thousand followers on Instagram. Devita's motivation for visiting Bonbin Public stems from a personal need to use the coffee shop's physical architecture and photo spots as backdrops for her personal social media content. In this context, a digital mutualistic symbiosis occurs: Bonbin Public provides a "feeds-ready" physical space, while consumers exploit that space to bolster their digital presence and simultaneously promote the venue for free through their own social networks.

However, a critical analysis of the data reveals a functional gap in this digital ecosystem. Bonbin Public's management has proven highly adept at building digital expectations through promotions of attractive bundled packages that align closely with what is advertised on Instagram. Nevertheless, these high visual expectations often clash with the actual experience on the ground. When the digital ecosystem successfully attracts large crowds during peak hours, this acquisition strategy exposes its limits, as illustrated by Arimbi's experience with the glass-to-plastic cup switch described earlier. This imbalance demonstrates that Bonbin Public's current digital ecosystem remains focused on customer acquisition strategies based on visual appeal, yet this has not been fully supported by the operational readiness of its physical management to sustain long-term loyalty. This aligns with consumer behavior theory, which describes the process by which individuals consider, select, purchase, use, and evaluate a product to meet their needs [12]. This process is influenced by four main factors that shape this behavior: cultural, social, psychological, and personal [13]. These four factors are interrelated and shape the way consumers choose a coffee shop.

A *coffee* shop is no longer just a place to buy a drink. It serves as a place to work, socialize, relax, and express one's lifestyle [14]. These findings align with Zulkarnain's (2025) research, which suggests that among the younger generation, coffee shops have undergone a functional shift from merely being places to enjoy drinks to becoming social hubs, educational institutions, and an integral part of young people's lives [15]. This pattern is consistent with research conducted by Loka et al. (2025), who found that exposure to viral content on social media can exacerbate Generation Z's tendency toward FOMO, driving people to follow trends or visit popular places so as not to feel left out. Agung Loka Jnanatepasa et al., "The Influence of Exposure to Viral Content on TikTok on Levels of

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) Among Gen Z in Denpasar," *Medium Universitas Udayana* 3 (2025): 209–27. Maharani, Martini, and Hidayath (2024) similarly note that coffee shop designs that are "Instagrammable" and go viral on social media directly trigger FOMO behavior among teenagers, turning coffee shops into destinations meant to be visually shared rather than simply places to drink coffee [5]. This phenomenon is clearly evident at Bonbin Public, where the digital ecosystem compels consumers to prioritize visual aesthetics over the coffee's primary function, with visiting the trendy Bonbin Public serving as a way for younger consumers in Tulungagung to seek social validation and avoid feeling left behind by contemporary lifestyle trends.

Personal factors also influence consumer behavior. As illustrated by Devita's role as a micro-influencer discussed earlier, digital presence has become part of the motivation for visits, consistent with the findings of Susilo & Nggili (2025), who also found that psychological and personal factors—such as the desire for comfort and practical considerations—help shape coffee-purchasing behavior among young consumers [16]. Psychological factors also play a significant role. Both informants were initially drawn to Bonbin Public because of its popularity on social media, but they expressed a willingness to return because they were satisfied with the atmosphere, service, prices, and overall experience. This suggests that initial interest, influenced by digital trends, can evolve into a desire to revisit if the actual experience meets the expectations shaped by visual content on social media.

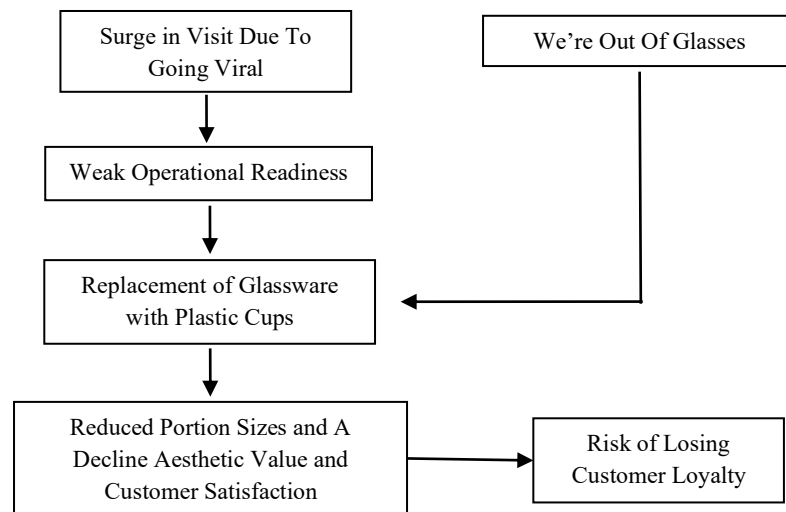
Consumer Perceptions of Products, Prices, and Service

Consumer perceptions of products are one of the factors that determine customers' decisions to visit or return to a coffee shop. Dewi, Mashur, and Rahmat (2024) found that menu variety is crucial for attracting customers because a wide range of options can spark customers' curiosity to try the products offered, and a pleasant taste enhances satisfaction and encourages repeat business [17]. Devita found Bonbin Public's menu presentation appealing, whereas Arimbi considered the menu's taste to be standard but still commensurate with the price offered. These differing assessments indicate that expectations built through social media do not always align with actual on-site experiences.

In terms of price, both informants considered the prices at Bonbin Public and Ruang Temu to be commensurate with the quality and experience received, including the atmosphere and the visual appeal shared. Dewi, Mashur & Rahmat (2024) added that customers are usually willing to spend more money if they receive additional benefits such as comfort or a positive experience [17]. Using satisfaction as a mediating variable, Archie & Rita (2025) demonstrated that pricing has a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty in their study of coffee shops [18]. Alfian (2026) also found that in the contemporary coffee sector, price perception has a greater influence on customer loyalty than service quality [19]. This is relevant to Bonbin Public's young consumers, who are willing to pay more for the visual appeal offered.

Perceptions of product and service quality are also key factors in shaping customer satisfaction. According to Safnur, Yerizal, and Bismark (2025), customers evaluate a product's quality based on its appearance, consistency of taste, and its ability to meet their needs and expectations according to Prasetyo & Setiadi (2026), service speed, responsiveness, a friendly and polite attitude, and staff's ability to meet customer requests all influence customer satisfaction at coffee shops [21]. Both informants stated that menu variety, attractive product presentation, and friendly, responsive staff service are key attractions for visiting Bonbin Public.

However, Arimbi raised an important point regarding inconsistencies in service delivery at Bonbin Public. Bonbin Public's main appeal, which relies on visual aesthetics and a digital ecosystem, has led to a surge in fluctuating visitor volumes at certain times. The results of this qualitative study reveal a critical finding regarding a wide gap between expectations built through digital channels and the reality of operational service delivery on the ground, as reflected in the glass cup shortage discussed previously. Beyond the physical reduction in drink volume, this inconsistency also diminished the aesthetic and shareable quality of the product that many younger visitors specifically come for.

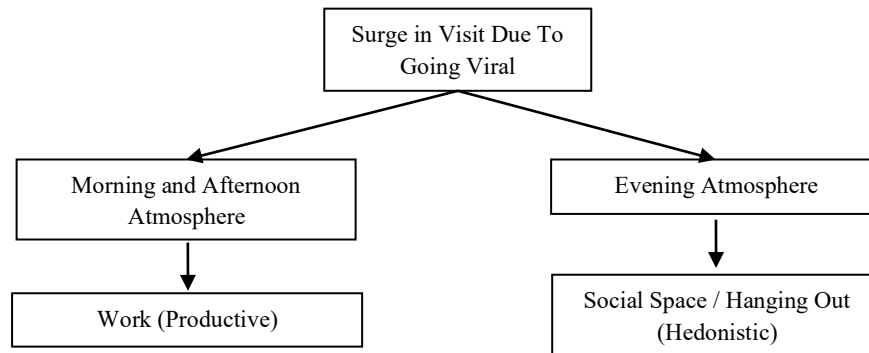


A critical analysis of this phenomenon reveals that Bonbin Public is facing an overcapacity issue due to a highly aggressive digital marketing strategy that has not been balanced by robust supply chain management and well-prepared internal operations. The switch from glass cups to plastic cups is not merely a technical issue regarding beverage containers, but rather a degradation in product quality. For younger consumers who come for the aesthetic appeal, glass cups are part of the “visual contract” promised by social media. When those glasses are replaced with plastic and portion sizes are reduced, consumers’ hedonic value and price fairness are immediately compromised. Although Arimbi claims the taste remains the same and the price is still reasonable, such inconsistencies in standards become a fatal weakness for business sustainability.

Theoretically, customer loyalty is heavily influenced by both product and service quality simultaneously. Consistency is the key to transforming consumers who come in due to FOMO (fear of missing out on a fleeting trend) into long-term loyal customers. If these negative experiences during peak hours continue to recur, customer satisfaction will gradually erode. The case of reduced portion sizes and changes to the packaging design at Bonbin Public during peak hours demonstrates that digital popularity acts like a double-edged sword: it can attract crowds in an instant, but if the operational systems in the kitchen and physical service aren’t prepared to handle it, this will backfire, eroding customer trust and thwarting the development of long-term loyalty. This shows that failure to maintain operational standards can erode perceptions of quality even if the taste remains the same. According to Girsang & Situmeang (2024), customer loyalty is positively influenced by both product and service quality [22].

The Influence of Atmosphere and Facilities on the Consumer Experience

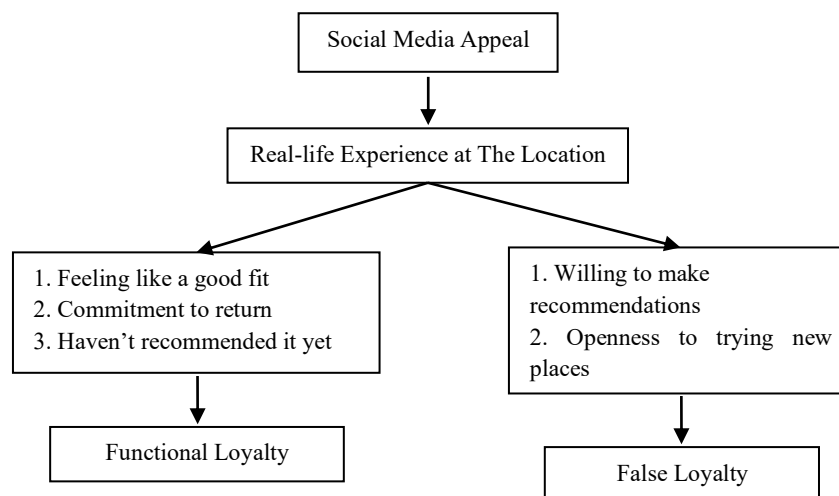
Atmosphere and facilities are other important elements that influence how consumers evaluate their experience at a coffee shop. The atmosphere a coffee shop creates through lighting, music, design, and cleanliness is crucial in fostering a sense of comfort and the desire to return. Before tasting the food, customers often pay attention to the atmosphere in a coffee shop [23]. At Bonbin Public, perceptions of the interior design vary. Some consumers find it appealing, while others consider it ordinary. This aligns with Ali & Melinda (2023), who note that the influence of a store’s atmosphere on satisfaction is subjective [8]. The presence of photo spots serves as an added value that encourages consumers to share their experiences on social media. According to Zacqualine et al. (2025), enjoyment and loyalty are strongly influenced by the emotional and social value of shareable experiences [24]. Both informants rated the lighting and background music as appropriate for the desired atmosphere, and the cleanliness of the venue was also well maintained. However, as one informant's account illustrates, comfort at Bonbin Public fluctuates considerably depending on the time of visit, presenting a unique challenge in that the experience customers have does not always align with the content featured on social media.



Critically, this phenomenon indicates that Bonbin Public exhibits a dual function of its physical space to serve two distinct market segments within a single day. From morning through midday, Bonbin Public functions as a utilitarian space that accommodates the study needs of college and high school students. However, at night—driven by the digital ecosystem and massive trends on social media—the space transforms into a social-hedonic space where crowds gather to hang out and express their lifestyles. These extreme fluctuations in comfort pose a major challenge in maintaining consistency in the customer experience. Visual content posted on Instagram or TikTok often obscures the reality of these temporal fluctuations, thereby creating false expectations for new customers. If a customer arrives in the evening expecting the quiet comfort depicted digitally, they will be disappointed by the noisy atmosphere on-site. Therefore, if Bonbin Public wishes to build stable customer loyalty, management must not allow these fluctuations in comfort to go unchecked. This aligns with the findings of Putri, Prabawani, and Widayanto (2023), who show that the store atmosphere significantly influences the likelihood of return visits [23]. Thus, maintaining a consistent atmosphere is an aspect that Bonbin Public's management must continuously prioritize, given that most customers arrive with specific expectations already formed before their first visit.

Customer Loyalty at Bonbin Public

Bonbin Public has proven successful in attracting customers through social media, but what matters more is whether that interest can be sustained and turned into loyalty. Customer loyalty is a commitment to return and make repeat purchases, demonstrated through recommendations and continued patronage even as new coffee shops open [25]. At Bonbin Public, this loyalty is built upon the initial appeal on social media and the actual experience, which determines whether customers stay. As shown by the two informants' contrasting profiles described earlier, similar levels of satisfaction do not necessarily result in the same level of loyalty. Rusti & Irham (2024) state that loyalty is strengthened through repeated positive experiences [26]. However, in Devita's case, her interest continues to compete with the constant stream of new content emerging, making her loyalty vulnerable to being displaced by the next trend. Wijaya & Widjaja (2024) show that brand equity has a positive effect on loyalty [1]. However, at Bonbin Public, this equity still appears to rely on rapidly changing trends rather than stable product or service differentiation.



Angie, Fahlevy, and Sinambela (2023) assert that coffee shop loyalty is shaped by a combination of price, atmosphere, and high-quality products [25]. Syifak, Qamariah, and Izzudin (2022) add that it is important to provide customers with strong reasons to return, rather

than relying solely on initial appeal [27]. Thus, Bonbin Public's main challenge is not attracting attention on social media—since that has already proven successful—but rather converting that interest.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, the digital ecosystem formed by owned media and user-generated content plays an active role in shaping the visitation decisions of young consumers in Tulungagung, primarily by triggering FOMO rather than relying on conventional word-of-mouth, a pattern reinforced by consumers who act as informal micro-influencers using the coffee shop's physical space as a backdrop for their own content. This digital-driven interest, however, exposes a structural gap between what is promised online and what is actually delivered on-site, most visibly during peak hours, when service inconsistencies directly undermine the visual experience that draws customers in, and in the shifting atmosphere between its quiet daytime and crowded nighttime character, which is rarely reflected in the content circulated online.

This gap directly shapes the loyalty patterns observed among the two informants. Although both remained satisfied overall, their loyalty diverged in ways that satisfaction alone cannot explain: one remained willing to recommend the place yet stayed open to newer alternatives, while the other showed stronger behavioral commitment but never actively advocated for the brand. This divergence indicates that loyalty formed primarily through trend-driven interest tends to be fragile and easily displaced by newer content, rather than anchored in stable product or service differentiation.

These findings suggest that digital popularity is effective in driving first-time visits, but the sustainability of customer loyalty depends more on consistency in product quality, service, and on-site comfort than on visual appeal alone. Bonbin Public's management therefore needs to balance its digital marketing strategy with operational readiness, ensuring that the experience promised through content is one the business can consistently deliver, so that interest generated through FOMO can be converted into long-term customer loyalty.

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