Exploring the Influence of Social Media Marketing Strategy on Customer Attitudes and Purchase Intentions in Casual Dining Sector

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Within the restaurant sector, social media has evolved into an essential channel for marketing communication that shapes consumer perceptions and influences dining decisions. This study probes the effects of SMMS specifically Online Advertising (OA) and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on customer behavior within casual dining establishments. Through a descriptive-correlational research framework, the study collected quantitative data using structured questionnaire instruments distributed to restaurant patrons. To examine the impact of SMMS, the study utilized descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis, focusing on their relationship with customer attitude and purchase intention. Results confirm that both eWOM and online advertising significantly predict customer attitudes and purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of a strong online presence, engaging content, and strategic digital promotions. The study concludes that casual dining restaurants should invest in social media engagement, user-generated content, and targeted advertising to invite and retain consumers. By leveraging responsible social media marketing strategies, restaurants can enhance brand reputation, increase customer interactions, and drive sales growth. **Keywords:** Social Media Marketing Strategy (SMMS), Electronic Word-of-the-Mouth (eWOM), Online Advertisement, Customer Attitudes, Purchase Intention

INTRODUCTION

Social networking proven to be among the very important online activities in recent years, and social media has been steadily growing in importance in all types of businesses. In the fast-paced industry of hospitality and tourism maintaining the quantity of customers patronizing the casual dining restaurant is imperative. Li, Kim and Choi, (2021) assert that social networking platforms help casual dining restaurant businesses increase brand awareness and achieve marketing communication by generating leads. Therefore Fernando, (2021) explained that the market is more competitive through innovation, globalization and constantly changing the markets which rapidly affect the business industry. Thus, hospitality and tourism industries now recognize social media interaction with a customer as an essential element of marketing strategy.

In this regard social media platforms support and shape the flow of regular operations of entrepreneurs according to Onobrakpeya and Otutuadum, (2024). Therefore, effective marketing and promotional strategies can develop the company's long-term success. Dwivedi, et.al., (2021) assert that SMMS offers gamut opportunities to businesses through better brand recognition. Marketing is the activities and processes used to communicate and deliver offerings to the customers. Thus, the most common way to reach customers is through promotion, publicity and advertising. With that, businesses such as casual dining restaurants maximize the use of SMMS or social media marketing strategy in promoting their businesses. In the same vein, Tersen & Wecken, (2017), espoused that social media can trigger attitude shifts in the minds of customers about the products and services addressed which led to an effect on their future purchase intention. Moreover, marketers are investing more attention in SMMS to engage customers as well as to share their positive interactions with the product or services which potentially motivate others to purchase and eventually visit the establishment.

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Furthermore, according to Kumar, Konar, & Balasubramanian, (2020) marketers are constantly innovating and doing different strategy to convince the customer into purchasing their product and service. In the same vein, (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019), remarks that digital networking is useful and convenient marketing means for communication to customers. In one click away social media has the power to disseminate information. Hence the idea of using SMMS is linked to electronic word of the mouth (EWOM) and online advertisement (OA), a phenomenon recognized as a significant marketing tool that greatly influences the purchase intention and customer attitude towards the casual dining restaurants they have visited. Given the unpredictable outcomes experienced by many casual dining restaurants who utilized social media, it is evident that determining the optimal approach to leverage emerging technologies poses a great challenge to them. Although social networking sites are well established the strategy of social media marketing involves crucial principles aiming to create a sustainable online community enthusiastic follower. Therefore, the researcher believe that effective implementation of this strategy will heighten awareness and motivate the customer to buy the products and services offered by the casual dining restaurant and repeatedly choose to promote its product and services to their friends via online and personal approach, thus cultivating customer loyalty.

According to Khrais & Gabbori, (2023), it is emphasized that the current count of social media users exceeds 1.298 billion and potentially grows up to 3 trillion by 2026. In a competitive market where Bani World plays an important role efficiency is the key. If the casual dining establishments aim to expand their market with this BANI world therefore it is necessary to understand the significance of utilizing SMMS effectively. Understanding how to maximize the full potential usage of SMMS for restaurants is an essential way to enhance customer opportunities and engagement. Therefore, the researcher asserts that SMMS will enable the restaurants to establish and maintain personal connections with their new and loyal customers.

Moreover, most existing studies on social media marketing strategies (SMMS) focus on fast food and fine dining restaurants, leaving a gap in research on casual dining restaurants in Valencia, Bukidnon. Thus, the researcher believes the significance of this study will be used as a tool in understanding social media marketing strategy and its benefits towards promotional activities in casual dining restaurant establishment. This will become the bridging gap to help the establishments improve their customer experience and relation to their future and loyal customers. It will also help casual dining restaurants to develop and be ready on online trends, innovations and embark in new opportunities to explore towards achieving online marketing goal as an implication on evaluating the customer perspective.

OBJECTIVES

This study intends to assess how customer evaluate social media marketing strategy (SMMS) employed by a casual dining restaurant, with particular focus on two key components: eWOM and online advertisements. It also seeks to determine the significant relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention. Additionally, the study aims to test the connection between SMMS and customer attitudes when choosing a restaurant. Finally, it investigates the extent to which social media marketing strategies can predict customer purchase intention and attitude.

METHODS

Research Design

To assess the associations of variables, this study followed a descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the nature and strength of relationships between variables without manipulating them. Specifically, the research aimed to explore the association between SMM strategy dimensionally e-WOM and online advertising (OA)—and their effect on purchase intention and customer attitude toward casual dining restaurants in Valencia City, Bukidnon. The descriptive aspect of the design was utilized to systematically capture and present current consumer behaviors and perceptions, while the correlational approach enabled the researcher to statistically assess whether significant relationships exist among the identified variables. This design was deemed suitable for understanding real-world patterns in a natural setting, thereby providing insights that are both relevant and generalizable to the target population.

Participants of the Study

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To obtain an unbiased sample, this study utilized random sampling in the selection of participants. Participants chosen were 390 customers from casual dining restaurants in Valencia City, based on the calculated size generated using Raosoft Sample Size Calculator. The computation was made with statistical parameters of 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and a 50% response rate assumption taken in the total population of 24,616 individuals aged 15 to 80 years and above residing in Población, Valencia City, Bukidnon, as of 2022.

Data Collection Instrument

The researcher adapted questionnaires from the study of Tersen and Wecken entitled #wheretoeat: The impact of electronic word-of-mouth in social network media on millennials' purchase intention in restaurant setting (2017) to use in gathering data.

Two sections made up the questionnaire. In the first section, there is the social media marketing strategy focusing on the electronic word of mouth and online advertisement, while the second part is about customer purchase intention and customer attitude. It has 20-item scale, 10 for the social media marketing strategy divided into E-WOM and Online Advertisement, and 5 items-scale intended for the purchase intention and another 5 items-scale for customer attitude. The Likert scale with five points was employed having the values "Strongly Agree', "Agree", "Slightly Agree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree" to evaluate impacts. To ensure that the instrument fits the context of the study, the instrument underwent a content validation, reliability, and pilot testing where the Cronbach's Alpha resulted as follows.

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Electronic Word of Mouth	.891	Good
Online Advertisement	.886	Good
Purchase Intention	.881	Good
Customer Attitude	.880	Good

Data Gathering

In collecting the information, certain protocols were observed. First, the researcher serves communication letter with the Office of the City Mayor in Valencia City Bukidnon to ask permission to get data on how many new casual dining restaurants establishments were open in the year 2023. After getting the data, the researcher approaches the owners and restaurant management by informing them of the intention of the research and requesting permission if they would like to participate on the survey. After getting permission the researcher then distributed the survey questionnaire to the clients of these casual dining restaurants through face-to-face, and online platform like messenger and google forms.

Data Analysis

To gain a clearer understanding of the data, the researchers utilized various statistical tools with the assistance of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, standard deviation (sd) and frequencies, were employed to summarize demographic profiles of the respondents and to present an overview of their responses to the survey items. These helped show common trends and variations in the data. To analyze the association of SMMS specifically eWOM and online advertising (OA) and customers' purchase intention (CPI) and customer attitude (CA) toward casual dining restaurants, the researchers applied multiple regression analysis using SPSS. This helped determine how strongly and significantly these marketing strategies influenced consumer behavior.

Ethical Consideration

This study is grounded in the principles of scientific integrity, human rights, and respect for individual dignity. Ethical considerations emphasize the importance of voluntary and informed participation, with a primary focus on safeguarding the rights, safety, and well-being of all participants. All data collected were handled in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), ensuring that participants' personal information remained confidential and

was processed exclusively for academic and ethical research use. During the research process is handled with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Participants are assured that their data will be stored securely, anonymized when necessary, and protected against unauthorized access or disclosure.

RESULTS

1. How are the participants characterized in terms of gender, age, occupation, social media platform used, and hour spent log-in?

The gender distribution of the respondents in terms of percentage and frequency are shown in Table 1. As the table shows majority (68.46%) of the participants are females compared to the male counterparts which is only (31.54%). This implies that most of the customers' patronizing the service in casual dining restaurants are females.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	123	31.54
Female	267	68.46
Total	390	100

Note: Participant's Gender

Table 2 displays the age-specific frequency and percentage division of the participants. Most participants (60.51%) ranged from 18-25 years old. The finding reveals that most of the participants are young adults, which is most likely prominent in using social media. According to Sundo (2024), most young adults patronize the usage of social media when visiting casual dining restaurants.

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants' Age

Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years' old	236	60.51
26-40 years' old	118	30.26
41-59 years' old	36	9.00
60 years' old and above	0	0
Total	390	100.00

The participants' frequency and percentage distribution by occupation are displayed in Table 3. The majority (70%) of the participants, according to the table, are employed. Dixon in Statista (2022) published shows that most social media users were employed. This supported the observation of the researcher during the gathering of data.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants' Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	78	20.00
Self-employed	39	10.00
Employed	273	70.00
Total	390	100.00

The percentage and frequency digital sites that the participants frequently utilize are displayed in Table 4. The result shows that majority of respondents use Facebook having a 42.56%. The findings supported the study of (Peters & Remaud, 2020) highlighting the Facebook has and will remain a vital tool for brands' marketing strategies moving forward.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants based on used Social Media Platform

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	166	42.56
Instagram	53	13.59
TikTok	97	24.87
Twitter	74	18.97
Total	390	100.00

The frequency and proportion of participants' time spent logging in are shown in Table 5. The majority of individuals logged in for more than five hours, with the greatest percentage (31.03%), according to the data. This result is in consonance that the average utilization of social media as published by Dixon at Statista (2024) is 143 minutes every day.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants' hour spent log-in.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1 hour	114	29.23
2-3 hours	108	27.69
4-5 hours	47	12.05
More than 5 hours	121	31.03
Total	390	100.00

2. What is the level of customer assessment of the social media marketing strategy in a casual dining restaurant in terms of the following:

2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

2.2 Online Advertisement

Table 6 presents the customers' assessment of the social media marketing strategy in terms of E-Word of the Mouth in a casual dining restaurant. It can be gleaned from the table that the customers rated E-WOM with an overall mean of M= 4.67, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This implies that the customers were very satisfied with the overall information presented in social media platforms.

Table 6. Frequency, Percentage and Mean Distribution of Customers' Assessment of Social Media Marketing Strategy E-WOM

Range	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	266	68.21
3.40 – 4.19	Agree	199	30.51
2.60 – 3.39	Slightly Agree	5	1.28
1.80 – 2.59	Disagree	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Total		390	100
Overall Mean		4.67	
Interpretation		Strongly Agree	
SD		0.50	

Legend: 4.20-5.00 = Strongly Agree (SA) 3.40-4.19 = Agree (A) 2.60-3.39 = Slightly Agree (SA) 1.80 – 2.59 = Disagree (D) 1.00- 1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

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Specific Indicators of E-WoM	Mean	Interpretation	SD	
1. Post on social media about the restaurants make you confident in deciding to go.	4.52	Strongly Agree	0.62	
2. Presentation of the restaurant food using social media platform gives impression to the customers that it looks good, palatable and visually appetizing.	4.71	Strongly Agree	0.52	
3. Social media restaurant food presentation makes an impression, even a promise with the viewer	4.54	Strongly Agree	0.59	
4. Restaurant content on social media stimulate your attention.	4.60	Strongly Agree	0.55	Table 7 shows the
5. Received high ratings reviews for restaurant food and services affects my purchase intention.	4.71	Strongly Agree	0.50	

assessment of SMMS in online advertising. The composite means of 4.45 reveals that the respondents rated the online advertisement strategy as "Strongly Agree". Among the online advertisement indicators, the top 1 in the rank is "Restaurant and food advertisements in social media is relevant" having (M 4.51) interpreted as "Strongly Agree". This implies that customers of casual dining restaurants in Valencia City believe that promotions for restaurants and food on social media are pertinent and meaningful.

Table 7. Frequency, Percentage and Mean Distribution of Customers' Assessment of Social Media Marketing Strategy Online Advertisement

Range Percentage	Interpretation	Frequency	
4.20 − 5.00	Strongly Agree	194	49.74
3.40 − 4.19	Agree	178	45.64
2.60 − 3.39	Slightly Agree	18	4.62
1.80 − 2.59	Disagree	0	0.00
1.00 − 1.79	Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Total		390	100
Overall Mean			4.45
Interpretation		Strongly Agree	
SD		0.58	

Legend: 4.20-5.00 = Strongly Agree (SA) 3.40-4.19 = Agree (A) 2.60-3.39 = Slightly Agree (SA) 1.80 − 2.59 = Disagree (D) 1.00- 1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Specific Indicators of Online Advertisement	Mean	Interpretation	SD
1. Restaurant and food advertisements in social media is relevant.	4.51	Strongly Agree	0.65
2. The restaurant advertisement on social media are consistent with the actual product and services.	4.21	Strongly Agree	0.82
3. Visual appeal is just as important as the tasting experience of the food.	4.51	Strongly Agree	0.72
4. It is worth visiting a restaurant that has been recommended on social media.	4.58	Strongly Agree	0.61

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5. I choose to visit this new restaurant after being discussed on social media.	4.47	Strongly Agree	0.63

3. Is there a significant relationship between Customer Purchase Intention and E-WOM??

H01: Customer Purchase Intention and eWOM are not significantly correlated.

The link between e-WOM and purchase intention is seen in Table 8. e-WOM and customer purchase intentions have a 0.173 connection, the findings, as illustrated in Table 8, demonstrate statistical significance at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8. Analysis of the relationship between Electronic Word of the Mouth (E-WOM) and customer purchase intention?

Correlations			
		EWOM AVE	**PI AVE**
EWOM AVE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 390	.173** 0.001 390
PI AVE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.173** 0.001 390	1 390

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

4. Does social media marketing strategy have a significant impact on customer attitude toward choosing a restaurant?

H02: There is a significant relationship between SMM Strategy and customer attitude when choosing restaurants.

The connection of SMMS and customer attitude while selecting restaurants is seen in Table 9. The findings reveal a positive correlation between social media marketing strategy dimensions such as Electronic Word of the Mouth and Online Advertisement in relation to customer attitude when choosing specific restaurant to visit.

Table 9. Analysis of the relationship between social media marketing strategy and customer attitude when choosing a restaurant

Correlations				
		EWOM AVE	**OA AVE**	**CA AVE**
EWOM AVE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 390	.152** 0.003 390	.277** 0.000
OA AVE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.152** 0.003 390	1 390	.204** 0.000 390
CA AVE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.277** 0.000 390	.204** 0.000 390	1 390

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

5. Is social media marketing strategy a predictor of customer purchase intention and attitude?

H03: Social media marketing strategy is a predictor of customer purchase intention and customer attitude in patronizing the restaurants.

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The findings of a regression analysis of social media marketing tactics, particularly online advertising (OA) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), as predictors of customer intention for restaurant purchases are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Regression Analysis of Social Media Marketing Strategy as Predictor of Customer Purchase Intention and Customer Attitude

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
	(Constant)	3.377	0.231		14.63	0.000
1	OA_AVE	0.222	0.051	0.214	4.322**	0.000
	(Constant)	2.661	0.337		7.899	0.000
	OA_AVE	0.2	0.052	0.192	3.871	0.000
2	EWOM_AVE	0.175	0.06	0.144	2.895**	0.004

Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

Model Summary

R = .257   Adjusted R² = .061   F = 13.711**   p = .000

***Significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)*

Table 10.1 presents the regression analysis focusing on the SMMS, specifically Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and Online Advertising (OA), influence customer attitudes toward restaurants.

Table 10.1 Regression Analysis of Social Media Marketing Strategy as Predictor of Customer Purchase Intention and Customer Attitude

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	2.518	0.312		8.067	0.000
	EWOM_AVE	0.378	0.066	0.277	5.681**	0.000
2	(Constant)	1.824	0.37		4.932	0.000
	EWOM_AVE	0.343	0.066	0.252	5.173	0.000
	OA_AVE	0.192	0.057	0.165	3.392**	0.001

Dependent Variable: Customer Attitude

Model Summary

R = .322   Adjusted R² = .099   F = 22.326**   p = .000

***Significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)*

DISCUSSION

The researcher observed that the majority of the respondents who visited the establishments are females. This may imply that females are more active in patronizing the service of casual dining restaurants using social media. According to Al-Gunaid, et.al., (2021) women often used social media than men for educational purposes. This statement also supported the claim of Choi et. (2020) which assert that females are more actively share knowledge in social media than males.

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Mensah & Onyancha (2021), assert that the age group 20-29 years old drive the most social media utilization. This was followed by those who belonged to the participants' ages ranging from 26-40 years old. However, it is interesting to mention that among the group, ages ranging from 41-59 have less frequency of using social media as platform.

The researcher observed that majority of the participants who are prominent in social media as a platform are employed. This may imply that employed participants are more active in social media rather than self-employed and unemployed. According to Jong et al., (2021) social media influences the employee's work efficiency. As a result, social media is frequently utilized to create new opportunities for both personal and professional contacts to develop their networks of social support. Moreover, it should be noted also that 10% of the respondents are unemployed. This may imply that unemployed participants in not engaged in using social media. However, Efendioğlu, (2019) stated that unemployed people utilize social media in a somewhat noticeable way since they are forced to voice their unique opinions out of a work environment.

According to Tayco et.al (2024), Facebook is widely utilized platform in Philippines specifically when connecting to friends and family, access to information and discover service and products to purchase. Moreover, the researcher believed that Facebook is an excellent platform for building a brand's identity. It makes it possible for the casual dining restaurant to quickly and effectively contact their target market. This statement is supported by the study of Neethu Lekshmi & Rajalakshmi (2021), stating that Facebook is advocating a strategy that can increase brand awareness. In addition, according to Mengistu, (2020), Facebook has billion members worldwide, making it the largest social media network.

On the other hand, the lowest hour spent log-in falls to 4-5 hours having 12.05% only. However, this result is still aligning with the 2021 findings that mostly Filipinos average time in using social media is 4.06 as mentioned in the study of Tayco et.al (2024).

In this study, "the presentation of the restaurant food using social media and high ratings review for restaurant" get the highest assessment of (M= 4.71 interpreted as "Strongly Agree". This data indicates that accessibility of the said social media attributes is very important for the customers. This finding confirms the study presented by Estrada & Zavala (2020), that Facebook can leverage the restaurant to showcase their Unique Selling Proposition USP to different demographics. According to Soto-Cueva et al., (2021), Facebook has done extensive reach which help the restaurants to attract possible new customers.

This result aligns with Stanojevic et.al., (2024), study, who claimed advertisements through digital sites like Instagram and Facebook are highly relevant. Moreover, the lowest rank among the indicators with a mean of 4.21 is "The restaurant advertisement on social media is consistent with the actual product and services" which still interpreted "Strongly Agree". This result is in consonance with the study of (Kim, Yoo, & Yang, 2020) highlighted, that restaurant menu posted online is more likely effective in customer engagement. Customers who visited a certain restaurant were greatly influenced by how these restaurants used social media ads. In line with the preceding table, the researcher believed that since majority of the indicators received "Strongly Agree" assessment it is evident that online advertisement play a direct role on how the customer perceive the restaurant products and services. Online advertising is not only used to attract different target demographics, but it also helps to build a brand for the restaurant. This statement is aligned with the study of Hanaysha, (2022), who asserted that restaurants who used online advertisement can significantly foster brand equity and can influence the purchase intention of the customers.

Moreover, it can be seen that as the e-WOM increases, the customer purchase intention tends to increase as well. The findings suggests that positive online sentiments can influence customers' intentions to purchase the services and products of the restaurant. When customers are exposed to favorable online recommendations, they are more likely to express an intention to buy.

The findings are also supported by the study of Onobrakpeya & Otutuadum (2024), highlighted that customer decision to purchase and repurchase are positively influenced by online reviews, credibility of the message source and the quality of brand information. Therefore, positive e-WOM can lead a higher buying intentions and strong purchase intentions can turn drive more electronic word of the mouth activities. It is also notable that E-WOM often occurs on social media platforms, hence the positive relationship between Customer Purchase Intention and E-WOM

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suggest that social media marketing tactics that affect E-WOM also positively affect consumers' intentions to make purchases.

With a significance level of 0.000, the significant correlation between E-WOM and customer attitude is 0.277 at the 0.01 level. The findings show that customer attitude and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are more strongly correlated. Furthermore, new research demonstrates that eWOM, has a significant impact on patrons' sentiments toward restaurant selection. Lam et al. (2024) found that loyal customers drive eWOM, while satisfaction boosts eWOM through loyalty. Similarly, Uslu, (2020) showed that good service quality, including restaurant ambiance and staff behavior, increases satisfaction, leading to more positive eWOM. These findings suggest that positive electronic word of the mouth may strongly influence customers attitude towards choosing restaurant to visit.

According to the data, online advertising significantly increases purchase intention in model 1 ($\beta = 0.214$, p = 0.000) indicating that well-targeted digital advertisements can drive customer interest in visiting restaurants, thus in Model 2, it shows that both online advertising ($\beta = 0.192$, p = 0.000) and eWOM ($\beta = 0.144$, p = 0.004) is significantly impact purchase intention at the .01 level (F= 13.711, p=000) with a high multiple correlation (R=.257), thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. These findings suggest that while online advertisements are slightly more influential, customer-generated content and reviews also significantly affect purchase decisions. This statement is also supported by the study of (Li, Kim, & Choi, 2021) suggesting that digital marketing approaches which includes social media marketing engagement, positively impact customers' decisions to dine at the establishment. Moreover, (Anas, et al., 2023) suggest that SMMS contribute to increased customer satisfaction and positively influence purchasing intentions within the restaurant sector. The data reveal that effective social media marketing can shape customer attitudes and increase their likelihood of choosing specific dining venues.

In Model 1, eWOM has a strong positive impact ($\beta = 0.277$, p = 0.000), which means that online recommendations significantly shape customer perceptions. Furthermore, in Model 2, eWOM stays important ($\beta = 0.252$, p = 0.000), while online advertising also becomes significant ($\beta = 0.165$, p = 0.001), suggesting that ads further shape attitudes. The model explains 9.9% of customer attitude variation (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.099$), with a moderate relationship (R = 0.322) and statistical significance (F = 22.326, p = 0.000). These results confirm that both EWOM and online advertising influence customer attitudes, highlighting the importance of using both strategies in restaurant marketing. These results are reinforced by recent studies showing the significant effect of SMMS on customer attitudes toward restaurant patronage. Gruss et.al., (2020) posits that SMMS who foster a sense of community greatly boost customer engagement, leading to more favorable attitudes toward restaurant visits. This statement is also in consonance with the study of (Li, Kim, & Choi, 2021) highlighting that digital marketing strategies, especially social media engagement, significantly influence customers' dining decisions.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study shows that SMMS, especially eWOM and OA, significantly influence customer attitudes and purchase decisions in casual dining restaurants. eWOM has a stronger impact, as positive online reviews build trust and engagement, while online ads help shape customer perceptions of restaurant services and promotions.

The study finds that females and young adults (18-25 years old) are the most active social media users, making them key targets for restaurant marketing. Employed individuals also engage more with social media marketing, suggesting that businesses should create content suited to working professionals. Statistical analysis confirms that both eWOM and online ads significantly predict customer attitudes and buying decisions, highlighting the importance of a strong online presence, customer reviews, and strategic promotions. Casual dining restaurants in Valencia City, Bukidnon should focus on social media engagement, user-generated content, and targeted advertising to attract and retain customers. By using eWOM and online ads effectively, businesses can strengthen their brand, boost customer interaction, and increase sales and satisfaction.

For further research, future researchers can investigate the long-term impact of SMMS on customer retention and loyalty. Additional research could also investigate how different types of content like video ads, influencer marketing and live streams can affect customer engagement and purchasing behavior. Expanding the study to other types of regions, or international markets can enhance broader consideration of SMMS.

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