

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND BRAND LOYALTY INFLUENCE ON ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION FOR CHINESE CUSTOMERS IN THAI SUPERMARKET BUSINESSES

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Abstract

This research explores how social media marketing and brand loyalty impact the online purchase intention of Chinese customers in Thai supermarkets. The study examined 405 participants. Applying descriptive statistics and multiple Linear Regression determined that Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty exert a moderately positive effect on Online Purchase Intention. This shows the need for tailored marketing strategies. The Multiple Linear Regression analysis reveals that social media marketing ($R^2 = 0.206$) and brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.217$) moderately influence Online Purchase Intention. Key elements such as platform-specific features ($\beta = 0.254$, $p = 0.000$), peer influence ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.002$), regular brand usage ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.002$), and customer reward schemes ($\beta = 0.176$, $p = 0.004$) play significant roles in this effect. The findings indicate that Thai supermarkets can attract Chinese customers by optimizing social media marketing strategies (e.g., culturally relevant content on WeChat and Weibo), enhancing brand loyalty programs (e.g., personalized membership rewards), and providing tailored content (e.g., informative and engaging interactions). While social media activities do not directly influence buying decisions, they modestly contribute to increasing consumer recognition and interaction with brands. Additionally, supermarkets should develop differentiated strategies to cater to various groups, such as young consumers aged 25–34 and middle-income groups, to meet their needs better and enhance competitiveness.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Loyalty, Online Purchase Intention, Chinese customers, Thai Supermarkets.

INTRODUCTION

E-commerce, when integrated with social media marketing (SMM), transforms traditional online commerce by leveraging social platforms' expansive reach and interactive capabilities. Features on platforms like WeChat and Douyin have significantly advanced, with WeChat Pay now handling an impressive volume of over 1.5 billion transactions daily by 2023, showcasing a substantial increase from previous years. Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) substantially impact



consumer buying choices, as recent statistics highlight their crucial role in guiding consumer actions via social media platforms in China (myNZTE, 2023). Social media enhances brand visibility and customer engagement through targeted advertising, interactive content, and direct communication channels. Features like social shopping, which allow direct purchases from platform-specific content, influencer partnerships, and user-generated content, provide powerful tools for influencing purchasing decisions and building brand loyalty. The sophisticated data analytics these platforms offer enable precise marketing strategies and customer insights, making social media an indispensable asset for modern e-commerce operations. Brands must adapt their marketing strategies in real-time, leveraging dynamic advertising and feedback mechanisms, which remains critical in maintaining campaign effectiveness. Furthermore, the impact of social validation and community feedback remains a significant driver in shaping buying choices, underscoring their continued relevance in the digital era's consumer landscape.

Focusing on Chinese customers offers strategic benefits for supermarket businesses due to several compelling factors. The enormous consumer base and considerable purchasing capacity in China offer a substantial market potential, positioning it as an attractive destination for supermarket investments (China International Import Expo, 2024). The prevalent use of platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin facilitates unique marketing and sales opportunities due to their integration of social networking, e-commerce, and payment systems (Dudarenok, 2023). Additionally, the post-COVID-19 shift towards online shopping suggests that supermarkets with robust online presence and digital marketing strategies are positioned to attract more customers (Shaw et al., 2022; Mason et al., 2021). Furthermore, the integration of cultural nuances in marketing alongside the deployment of advanced technologies significantly enhances the shopping experience and operational efficiency, appealing to the technologically adept and culturally diverse Chinese consumer base (Wang et al., 2024). By capitalizing on these strategies, grocery stores can successfully connect with Chinese customers, thus boosting customer loyalty and increasing sales in this highly competitive market (Hua, 2024).

Thai supermarkets present unique opportunities to influence Online Purchase Intention through Social Media Marketing, Brand Loyalty, and strategic advantages. They effectively leverage platforms like WeChat and Alipay and influencer campaigns to engage Chinese customers and align with their purchasing habits, showcasing the power of Social Media Marketing. By offering familiar products, trusted brands, and tailored experiences, Thai supermarkets foster strong Brand Loyalty among Chinese online and in-store customers. Additionally, a strategic focus on blending local Thai and international offerings creates a compelling mix of novelty and comfort, attracting repeat

purchases and reinforcing customer loyalty. Seamless integration with Chinese-preferred digital payment platforms further enhances convenience and accessibility, driving Online Purchase Intention (Dudarenok, 2023).

This research underscores the interconnected roles of Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty in shaping Online Purchase Intention, highlighting their critical impact on purchasing behavior in Thai supermarkets.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effects of Social Media Marketing on Online Purchase Intention.
2. To investigate the effects of Brand Loyalty on Online Purchase Intention.

Research Hypotheses

1. H1: Social media marketing affects Online Purchase Intention.
2. H2: Brand Loyalty affects online customers' Online Purchase Intention.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social media marketing (SMM) is essential for supermarkets targeting Chinese consumers. Platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin dominate China's digital landscape, enabling seamless integration of shopping, payments, and social interactions (Zeng et al., 2019). By leveraging these unique ecosystems, supermarkets use SMM to enhance brand loyalty and influence purchase decisions.

Research highlights that personalized content and interactive campaigns on social media strengthen customer loyalty. On the issue of loyalty, Shizhe, OZEKI, and TANAKA (2024) claimed that it also measures global citizens in different ways, such as their global citizen identity, cognitive-behavioral characteristics, and whether people around them approve of that identity and their global awareness. Hence, by analyzing consumer data, supermarkets tailor promotions and loyalty programs, fostering deeper connections and meeting customer preferences (Li et al., 2023). Influencers and integrated social commerce features also encourage immediate purchases, driving higher conversion rates and boosting sales. Effective content strategies like live streaming, interactive polls, and user-generated campaigns align with platform trends, enhancing engagement and increasing traffic (Zeng et al., 2019).

In conclusion, SMM is a critical tool for engaging Chinese consumers, enabling supermarkets to build loyalty, influence buying behaviors, and adapt to evolving market dynamics for sustained growth (Li et al., 2023).

Brand Loyalty: Definition, Types, and Influencing Factors

Brand loyalty represents a consumer's commitment to a brand, influenced by quality, benefits, or emotional connections. This loyalty ensures consistent repurchasing, even amid competitive influences. For supermarkets, brand loyalty stems from service quality, including empathy and responsiveness, which improves satisfaction and reduces price sensitivity (Karunarathna et al., 2020).

Types of Brand Loyalty:

1. Emotional Loyalty: Driven by psychological connections, fostering customer advocacy, and enhancing brand reputation.
2. Behavioral Loyalty is evident in repeat purchases motivated by habit, convenience, or perceived value, ensuring steady revenue (Muhammad & Lasi, 2021).

Key factors include self-identity alignment, brand trust, and engaging social media strategies. Effective digital content and interactive platforms strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty (Abdullah & Faisal, 2022). Social media marketing enhances brand loyalty by fostering meaningful customer interactions, boosting retention, and driving long-term growth.

Customer Online Purchase Intention

Customer Online Purchase Intention reflects the likelihood of consumers buying goods or services in the future. It is a critical indicator for predicting sales outcomes and is heavily influenced by green marketing strategies, such as eco-friendly products, fair pricing, and sustainable promotions. Positive consumer attitudes toward environmental values significantly enhance purchase intentions, demonstrating the impact of sustainability-focused marketing in retail (Karunarathna et al., 2020).

Factors Influencing Purchase Intention

1. Green Marketing: Eco-friendly products, fair pricing, and sustainability-focused promotions align with consumer values, boosting intentions.
2. Customer Satisfaction and Store Reputation: A satisfying experience and a strong reputation enhance buying behavior.
3. Cultural and Market Dynamics: While cultural factors like individualism have limited influence, market settings significantly shape purchase decisions.
4. Social media and Environment: Trust in brands, product quality, and a well-designed shopping environment positively affect consumer choices (Muhammad & Lasi, 2021).

In conclusion, online purchase intention is shaped by green marketing, trust, and satisfaction. Retailers aligning strategies with environmental and consumer values can better influence buying behaviors and predict sales trends (Karunarathna et al., 2020).

Conceptual framework

This research framework explores the relationship between “Social Media Marketing”, “Brand Loyalty”, and “Online Purchase Intention”. Unlike the referenced study model, which incorporates “SMM Antecedents” as an additional independent variable and illustrates indirect relationships, this framework has been simplified to focus solely on direct relationships. It positions “Social Media Marketing” and “Brand Loyalty” as independent variables and “Online Purchase Intention” as the dependent variable. The framework shows that “Social Media Marketing” and “Brand Loyalty” directly influence “Online Purchase Intention”, following the approach of Almohaimmed (2019) with a streamlined scope tailored to the research objectives.

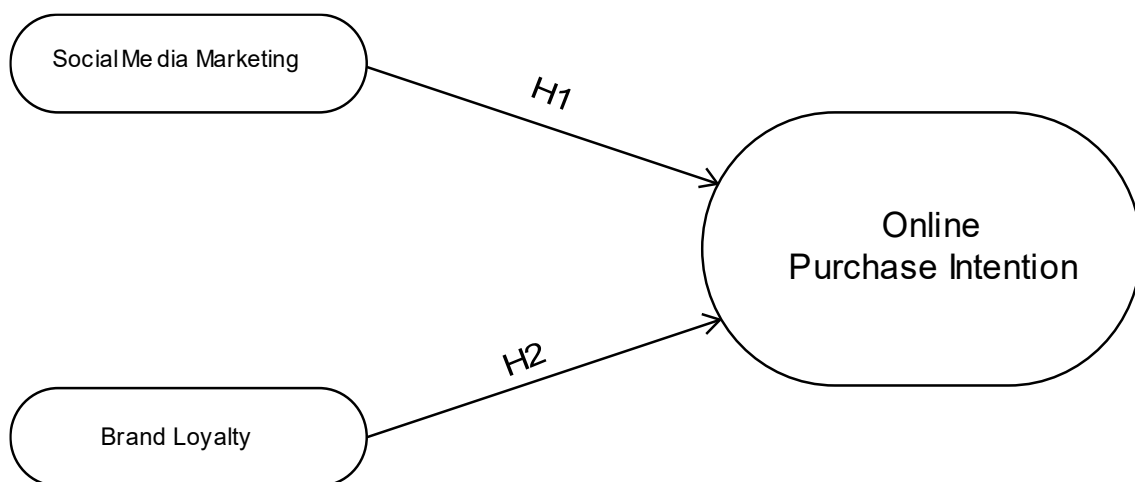


Figure 1. Research Framework

METHOD

The questionnaire consists of six parts: screening questions, profile, Social Media Use Behaviors, Social Media Marketing, Brand Loyalty, and Purchase Intention. The qualifying queries identify participants who align with the desired sample criteria. The demographic section aims to collect the respondents’ key personal attributes, providing a comprehensive, descriptive analysis of the results. Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty aim to thoroughly examine the relationship between each different variable and Online Purchase Intention.

One of the screening questions in this questionnaire is original to this study. The aim is to precisely and succinctly pinpoint the key demographic needed for this research (Chinese individuals residing in Thailand) while disqualifying those who do not fit the specified requirements. The 11

questions in “Part 2: Profile” to “Part 3: Social Media Use Behaviors” are adapted from Chanyapat (2021). The questions from Section 4: Social Media Marketing to Section 6: Purchase Intention were based on the Likert scale derived from the study by Almohaimmeed (2019), where the study location was changed from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to a supermarket in Thailand. However, this study also made some modifications to accommodate the change in the survey location.

Reliability and Content Validity

The questionnaire underwent a thorough assessment for content validity using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method. This step required a thorough assessment of every question in the survey to confirm that it precisely aligns with the study’s goals and theoretical frameworks. We seek the evaluation of three specialists who assessed and scored the alignment between the items and the intended goals. The scores were subsequently examined to determine the aggregate IOC value, which was determined to be 0.72 in this research. This elevated IOC value signified a robust correlation between the survey questions and the study’s goals, thus reinforcing the instrument’s content validity and reliability. Any elements found to be inconsistent in this assessment were adjusted or eliminated to guarantee that the final survey accurately and dependably measured the intended factors.

Language and Translation, the survey was rendered in both English and Chinese to enhance comprehension and guarantee precise feedback. A back-translation method was employed to preserve the accuracy of the survey’s content.

To assess the internal consistency of the responses, a Likert scale was applied to each segment of the questionnaire, covering areas such as social media marketing experience, brand loyalty, and buying intent. The structured response format of the Likert scale helped quantify the subjective assessment of attitudes and opinions. Cronbach’s alpha values for these sections were calculated to measure reliability. The Cronbach’s alpha values for social media marketing, brand loyalty, and Online Purchase Intention were 0.814, 0.841, and 0.830, respectively. Moreover, the comprehensive Cronbach’s alpha for the whole questionnaire, excluding the screening questions, demographic details, and social media usage patterns, stood at 0.904. For each segment, a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.61 or above was deemed satisfactory, signifying robust internal consistency in the dataset (Konting et al., 2009).

This systematic methodology aided in gathering accurate and pertinent information to thoroughly examine the impact of social media marketing, brand loyalty, and social media usage patterns on the purchasing choices of Thai Chinese customers.

Data Collection

The primary method for gathering data in this study was through web-based surveys, chosen for their effectiveness and broad accessibility. The digital questionnaire was crafted and disseminated via the WeChat group, focusing on engaging the Thai-Chinese population.

The online questionnaire was conducted on ‘WJX.cn’, a widely recognized platform in the Chinese Internet ecosystem known for its close integration with WeChat. The platform’s compatibility with WeChat is crucial because it is easy for the target group - Chinese customers. The researcher’s familiarity with the WJX.cn platform enhanced the efficiency of the survey process (from design to data collection).

Distribution and Interviews: Through WJX.cn, the survey was distributed to various WeChat groups frequently visited by Chinese customers in Thailand. This approach guarantees that the questionnaire is distributed to a broad segment of the intended demographic, capitalizing on their vibrant presence on social media platforms.

The combination of these methods aims to collect comprehensive and relevant data on how “Social Media Marketing” and “Brand Loyalty” affect the “Online Purchase Intention” of Chinese customers in Thailand who have used Online Purchases in Thai supermarkets.

Data Analysis

This research utilized descriptive statistical methods, such as frequencies and percentages, to examine the demographic characteristics of Chinese customers in Thai supermarkets. This study proposes two research hypotheses: Social Media Marketing affects Online Purchase Intention, and Brand Loyalty affects Online Purchase Intention. These hypotheses pertain to the decision-making process of Chinese customers in Thailand. However, do these two factors genuinely have such an impact? If so, to what extent? To validate these hypotheses, we intend to utilize a combination of multiple linear regression to examine the correlation between Media Consumption Patterns and Buying Intent.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of the Demographic Data

Title	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Your age	18-24 years old	71	17.53
	25-34 years old	194	47.90
	35-44 years old	74	18.27
	45-54 years old	23	5.68
	Over 55 years old	43	10.62
Your Gender	Female	204	50.37

Title	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Male	201	49.63
Your education level	College degree or below	117	28.89
	Bachelor's degree	249	61.48
	Postgraduate degree	39	9.63
Your monthly income	RMB 10,000 - 15,000	47	11.60
	RMB 3,000 - 7,000	257	63.46
	RMB 7,000 - 10,000	101	24.94
Do you frequently interact with Thai supermarkets on social media (e.g., likes, comments, shares)?	No	62	15.31
	Yes	343	84.69
Do you learn about products or services through social media before purchasing them in a Thai supermarket?	No	82	20.25
	Yes	323	79.75
What role do you think the brand interaction of Thai supermarkets on social media plays in improving brand favorability?	No effect	45	11.11
	Medium role	143	35.31
	Significant role	217	53.58
What influence do you think supermarket shopping guide recommendations on social media have on your purchasing decisions?	Medium impact	177	43.70
	High impact	137	33.83
	No impact	91	22.47

Your age: The 25-34 age group accounted for the highest proportion, at 47.9 percent, showing significant user participation in this age group. Next, the 18-24 and 35-44 age groups are relatively close, with 17.53 percent and 18.27 percent respectively. The 45-54 and 55+ age groups have lower participation, with only 5.68% and 10.62% respectively.

Your gender: The proportions of males and females are relatively close, with 49.63 percent of males and 50.37 percent of females. This indicates that the sample exhibits a reasonably even gender split without significant disparities between males and females.

Educational background: A significant majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree (61.48%), whereas those with an associate degree or less account for 28.89%. The proportion of respondents with postgraduate qualifications was relatively low at 9.63%, while there were no respondents with a PhD or above. This indicates that the overall education level of the respondents is skewed towards undergraduate and above, but there are relatively fewer people with higher education levels (postgraduate and doctoral).

Your education level: The educational level of respondents skews heavily towards those with a bachelor's degree, comprising 61.48% of the sample. Those with a college degree or below represent 28.89%, while postgraduate qualifications account for only 9.63%. There are no

respondents with a PhD or higher. This indicates that the survey primarily represents individuals with undergraduate education, with fewer insights from highly educated individuals.

Your monthly income: Most respondents are concentrated in RMB 3,000 to 7,000, accounting for 63.46%. Secondly, the income level of RMB 7,000 to 10,000 also occupies a relatively high proportion (24.94%). The proportion of respondents earning more than RMB 10,000 is lower, at 11.6 percent, and no one chose the option of less than RMB 3,000 or more than RMB 15,000.

Do you frequently interact with Thai supermarkets on social media? Most respondents (84.69%) frequently interact with Thai supermarkets on social media (e.g., through likes, comments, and shares). This high engagement indicates strong customer involvement and suggests that social media is an effective tool for fostering customer-brand relationships.

Do you learn about products or services through social media before purchasing them in a Thai supermarket? Nearly 80% (79.75%) of respondents learn about products or services through social media before purchasing them at Thai supermarkets, underscoring the platform's role in influencing purchasing decisions. This shows that social media content significantly impacts consumer behavior.

What role do you think the brand interaction of Thai supermarkets on social media plays in improving brand favorability? Brand Favorability: A significant portion (53.58%) of respondents believe that brand interaction on social media plays a significant role in improving brand favorability. Another 35.31% see it as having a medium role, while only 11.11% consider it to have no effect.

What influence do you think supermarket shopping guide recommendations on social media have on your purchasing decisions? Social media recommendations highly impact purchasing decisions for 33.83% of respondents and a medium impact for 43.7%. However, 22.47% reported no impact, suggesting that while social media is influential, not all consumers rely on it for purchase guidance.

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Social Media Use Behaviors

Title	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What kind of Thai supermarket content do you regularly follow-on social media that attracts you?	WeChat	230	56.79
	Weibo	228	56.3
	TikTok	175	43.21
	Xiaohongshu	152	37.53
	New Product Releases	272	67.16

Title	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What kind of Thai supermarket content do you regularly follow-on social media that attracts you?	Special Discounts and Offers	174	42.96
	Customer testimonials	213	52.59
	Behind the Scenes	204	50.37
	Food Industry Updates	160	39.51
What role do you think the brand interaction of Thai supermarkets on social media plays in improving brand favorability?	No effect	45	11.11
	Medium role	143	35.31
	Significant role	217	53.58
What influence do you think supermarket shopping guide recommendations on social media have on your purchasing decisions?	Medium impact	177	43.70
	High impact	137	33.83
	No impact	91	22.47

Refer to Table 2. What kind of Thai supermarket content do you regularly follow-on social media that attracts you? Weibo and Microblogging platforms are social media enthusiasts' top choices, with 56.79% and 56.3% usage rates, respectively. This indicates that these two platforms have high influence and activity among users and are suitable for promoting supermarket products or services. TikTok and Xiaohongshu have relatively low shares of 43.21% and 37.53%, respectively, but still have a certain user base.

What kind of Thai supermarkets' content do you follow on social media regularly post that attracts you: respondents have a clear preference for content posted on social media by Thai supermarkets. New product releases top the list with 67.16 percent, showing strong consumer interest in new products. Customer testimonials and behind-the-scenes stories followed with 52.59 percent and 50.37 percent, respectively, showing consumers' importance on reviews from others and brand image. At 42.96%, special discounts and offers are slightly less attractive than new product launches and customer testimonials. Food industry updates came in last with 39.51 percent, suggesting this content is less appealing on social media.

What role do you think the brand interaction of Thai supermarkets on social media plays in improving brand favorability? A significant majority of the participants (53.58%) believe that the engagement of Thai supermarkets on social media platforms is crucial, suggesting that such interactions positively influence brand perception. Over 53.58% of the participants view social media engagement by Thai supermarkets as having a 'major influence', highlighting the beneficial effect of such interactions on enhancing brand perception. Additionally, 35.31% of the participants consider it to have a 'moderate influence', suggesting that many also hold a favorable stance

towards social media engagement. Only 11.11% of respondents think it has no effect, which is relatively low.

What influence do you think supermarket shopping guide recommendations on social media have on your purchasing decisions: 43.7% of those surveyed feel that product suggestions on social platforms moderately affect their buying choices. 33.83% report a significant impact, whereas 22.47% indicate no effect. This suggests that a significant majority (77.53%) of the participants feel that social media shopping guides play a role in their purchasing choices, with the largest group reporting a moderate level of impact.

The average scores for the application types utilized by Thai supermarkets, the societal influence of social media, and the underlying technological support all fall within a range suggesting moderate agreement. The mean values for social media marketing (**between 3.38 and 3.41**) indicate that participants generally have a middling consensus on these elements of the marketing approach. The overall mean value of 3.39 confirms the general acceptance of social media marketing among Thai supermarkets. Despite not achieving a high level of consensus, the moderate agreement indicates the significant impact and efficacy of social media marketing in Thai supermarkets.

Thai supermarket customers demonstrated reasonable agreement with sharing positive feedback, regularly purchasing the same brand, holding a membership card, and endorsing products on social media. The mean values for brand loyalty (**the mean values between 3.39 and 3.46**) suggest that customers rated the brand loyalty of Thai supermarkets at a moderate level. Despite not achieving a high loyalty score, the average rating of 3.44 indicates that customers exhibit moderate loyalty to the Thai supermarket. This could be attributed to aspects like the quality of service, the variety of products available, and the effectiveness of promotional campaigns.

The mean values for online purchase intention (**between 3.38 and 3.40**) indicate that most respondents tend to have a moderate level of agreement. This implies that social media marketing tactics have a certain impact on consumers' buying choices. Nevertheless, the standard deviation shows a degree of divergence in the respondents' views regarding their intent to purchase. To delve deeper into consumer behavior, upcoming studies might consider investigating additional elements that shape buying intentions, including individual tastes, brand reputation sway, and marketing campaigns' impact.

Inferential Statistics

A comprehensive multiple linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying intent. The resulting regression model is presented below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y is the Online Purchase Intention,
- X₁ represents the types of applications used by Thai supermarkets,
- X₂ represents the social impact of Thai supermarkets,
- X₃ represents the supporting technologies used by Thai supermarkets.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients of Social Media Marketing on Online Purchase Intention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.843	.160		11.500	.000***		
Types of Applications Used by Thai Supermarkets	.223	.052	.254	4.251	.000***	.555	1.803
Social Impact of Thai Supermarkets	.167	.053	.190	3.131	.002**	.535	1.869
Supporting Technologies of Thai Supermarkets	.066	.051	.077	1.309	.191	.577	1.734

R² = 0.206, F=34.661, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

The R² value stands at 0.206, suggesting that the model accounts for about 20.6% of the variability in Online Purchase Intention. Detailed findings are as follows:

- The variety of applications utilized by Thai supermarkets ($\beta = 0.254$, $p = 0.000$) exhibits the strongest positive influence on buying intention.
- The social impact of Thai supermarkets ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.002$) also has a very significant positive effect on Online Purchase Intention.
- The supporting technologies used by Thai supermarkets ($\beta = 0.077$, $p = 0.191$) do not significantly affect Online Purchase Intention.

Collinearity statistics indicate that all variables have a VIF value less than 2, suggesting no severe multicollinearity issues.

The Influence of Brand Loyalty on Online Purchase Intention

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the impact of brand loyalty on online purchase intention. The resulting regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y is the Online Purchase Intention,
- X₁ represents positive word-of-mouth for Thai supermarkets,
- X₂ represents the continuity of using the same brand,
- X₃ represents having membership cards for Thai supermarkets.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients of Brand Loyalty on Online Purchase Intention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.771	.159		11.104	.000***		
Positive Word-of-Mouth for Thai Supermarkets	.147	.051	.169	2.860	.004**	.560	1.787
Continuity of using the same brand	.174	.056	.194	3.106	.002**	.501	1.995
Having membership cards for Thai supermarkets	.149	.052	.176	2.877	.004**	.520	1.924

R² = 0.217, F=37.007, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

The regression results are presented in Table 4.14, and the model can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 1.771 + 0.147X_1 + 0.174X_2 + 0.149X_3$$

The R² value is 0.217, indicating that the model explains approximately 21.7% of the variance in Online Purchase Intention. Detailed findings are as follows:

- Positive word-of-mouth for Thai supermarkets ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.004$) significantly positively affects Online Purchase Intention.
- The consistent use of the same brand ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.002$) demonstrates a highly significant positive impact on the intention to purchase.
- Having membership cards of Thai supermarkets ($\beta = 0.176$, $p = 0.004$) also significantly positively affects Online Purchase Intention.

Collinearity statistics indicate that all variables have a VIF value less than 2, suggesting no severe multicollinearity issues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Democratic Factors

Inform a number of important data (original) fields obtained from questionnaires, surveys, documents, interviews, observations, and other data collection techniques. It can be completed with a table or graphic to clarify the result.

This research explores the impact of social media marketing, consumer behavior on social platforms, and brand loyalty on the purchasing decisions of Chinese shoppers in Thai supermarkets, drawing from a sample of 405 participants. The findings are summarized as follows:

Demographic Insights and Comparisons

Age Distribution Insights

The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the majority, approximately 48%, belong to the 25–34 age group. This aligns with Kittiratanaviwat (2021), who identified younger, lower-income consumers as a key demographic cluster in Thai supermarkets. According to Kittiratanaviwat's study, these younger consumers, primarily aged 19–30, often exhibit distinct shopping behaviors such as prioritizing promotions and product variety.

Thai supermarket customers are divided into two primary groups: younger consumers with lower income (Cluster 1) and older consumers with higher income (Cluster 0). Cluster 1, which overlaps significantly with the 25–34 age group, emphasizes affordability and convenience in purchasing decisions. This demographic is also highly engaged with social media marketing, as reflected in the survey results, where nearly 80% of respondents learn about products or services through social media before making a purchase (Kittiratanaviwat, 2021).

By linking these insights to Kittiratanaviwat's findings (2021), it is evident that younger consumers represent a critical segment for developing brand loyalty. Effective social media marketing strategies, such as targeted promotions, interactive campaigns, and influencer collaborations, can foster deeper connections with this audience. Building loyalty among this group involves consistent engagement and tailoring content to their preferences, which strengthens their long-term association with the brand and enhances their lifetime value as customers. This age group's reliance on social media for product discovery suggests that targeted, platform-specific strategies could significantly impact engagement and conversion rates.

Income-Level Considerations

With 63.46% of respondents earning between RMB 3,000–7,000, affordability and perceived value are crucial. Pricing strategies significantly influence consumer loyalty in Thai supermarkets.

Tailored promotions and discounts for this income group could further enhance Online Purchase Intentions.

Gender Balance

The nearly equal gender distribution (50.37% female, 49.63% male) reflects a balanced target audience, enabling campaigns to appeal broadly without significant gender-specific segmentation.

Hypotheses and Results

H1: Social media marketing affects Online Purchase Intention.

Result: Supported.

Regression analysis confirms a medium effect of Social Media Marketing on purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.206$), consistent with Cohen's (1988) guidelines for effect size interpretation. The type of applications ($\beta=0.254$, $p=0.000$) and social impact ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.002$) are significant predictors, emphasizing the importance of platform-specific strategies.

H2: Brand Loyalty affects customers' Online Purchase Intention.

Result: Supported.

The regression analysis confirmed the moderate effect of brand loyalty on Online Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.217$), which is consistent with Cohen's (1988) guidelines for effect size interpretation. Continuous use of the same brand ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.002$) and loyalty programs ($\beta = 0.176$, $p = 0.004$) were identified as moderately influential dimensions. Notably, 63.46% of participants with mid-level incomes (RMB 3,000–7,000) valued such loyalty programs, which is consistent with findings by Li et al. (2023) that loyalty schemes resonate more with mid-income demographics.

Social Media Marketing:

Social Media Marketing shows a somewhat favorable effect on the likelihood of purchasing ($R^2 = 0.206$). This is particularly evident through platform-specific tools ($\beta = 0.254$, $p = 0.000$) and the social influence ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.002$), which contribute moderately to this positive impact. This notable positive impact is especially evident among

Users of platforms such as WeChat (56.79%) and Weibo (56.3%) highlight the significance of content that is both culturally attuned and captivating within China's digital landscape (Li et al., 2023).

Respondents with higher educational levels, particularly those with a Bachelor's degree or higher, show greater receptivity to these innovative and tailored digital marketing strategies, emphasizing the need for informative and entertaining elements catering to a well-educated audience. Social Media Marketing exhibits a moderate positive influence on Online Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.206$), with platform-specific applications ($\beta = 0.254, p = 0.000$) and social impact ($\beta = 0.190, p = 0.002$) identified as significant predictors. This notable positive impact is especially evident among users of platforms such as WeChat (56.79%) and Weibo (56.3%), highlighting the significance of content that is both culturally attuned and captivating within China's digital landscape (Li et al., 2023). Respondents with higher educational levels, particularly those with a Bachelor's degree or higher, show greater receptivity to these innovative and tailored digital marketing strategies, emphasizing the need for informative and entertaining elements catering to a well-educated audience.

Brand loyalty exhibits a moderate positive influence on Online Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.217$). Key drivers include continuity of use ($\beta = 0.194, p = 0.002$) and membership programs ($\beta = 0.176, p = 0.004$), which foster emotional bonds and promote behavioral consistency. This notable positive influence is particularly pronounced among individuals with average earnings who place high importance on such loyalty initiatives. 74% of participants stress that emotional elements significantly strengthen the role of brand loyalty in their buying choices (Muhammad & Lasi, 2021).

These findings suggest that incorporating emotional branding strategies could further strengthen these connections, deepening consumer loyalty effectively.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Thai supermarkets can achieve sustained growth and a competitive edge by integrating platform-specific strategies, innovative technologies, and authentic influencer collaborations. By prioritizing emotional branding, interactive campaigns, and robust loyalty programs, they can establish themselves as trusted destinations for Chinese consumers. Fostering vibrant online communities and delivering consistent quality and sustainability will further deepen customer relationships, reduce sensitivity to competitors, and secure long-term loyalty in a competitive market.

Implications and Recommendations for Thai Supermarkets

Thai supermarkets can greatly benefit from adopting a comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and platform-specific approach to social media marketing when engaging with Chinese consumers. Leveraging platforms like Weibo and WeChat for broad engagement is a key starting point.

WeChat's functionality extends beyond messaging, offering features like instant customer service, loyalty program integration, and seamless ordering through mini-programs. Meanwhile, Weibo is a powerful storytelling platform, allowing supermarkets to highlight their commitment to local sourcing, sustainability, and festive promotions through engaging narratives that resonate with the target audience.

For younger, trend-conscious consumers, platforms such as TikTok and Xiaohongshu offer significant potential. These platforms enable supermarkets to showcase their offerings creatively through short videos or visually appealing posts, emphasizing freshness, sustainability, and unique product highlights. These efforts help build a youthful and dynamic brand image that aligns with the preferences of this tech-savvy demographic, particularly the 25-34 age group, which represents the highest proportion of users (47.9%), demonstrating significant user participation. The 18-24 and 35-44 age groups follow with relatively close shares of 17.53% and 18.27%, while the 45-54 and 55+ age groups exhibit lower participation at 5.68% and 10.62%, respectively. These demographic insights highlight the importance of tailoring content to the younger audience while maintaining inclusivity for other segments.

To further enhance the shopping experience, Thai supermarkets should explore integrating innovative features like "click-to-buy" functionalities and direct e-commerce links into their social media posts. This seamless connection between content and commerce simplifies the customer journey, encouraging faster conversions. Advanced technologies such as augmented reality (AR) can also offer immersive experiences, enabling customers to visualize products or explore virtual store layouts. These features create a distinctive and memorable experience that sets Thai supermarkets apart in a competitive landscape. Customer feedback on social media marketing strategies reveals a moderate level of agreement, with mean values between 3.38 and 3.41, confirming a general acceptance of social media marketing's impact on consumer engagement.

Building trust is another cornerstone of effective engagement, which Singh (2024) described as monetizing the economy and assisting to create a new kind of faith, i.e., market. Collaborations with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) are essential for bridging cultural and language gaps while establishing credibility. KOLs can provide authentic endorsements through product reviews, recipe tutorials, or testimonials, reinforcing the brand's unique qualities, such as freshness, cultural inclusivity, and sustainability. Tailored campaigns that emphasize these attributes enhance brand perception and drive word-of-mouth marketing, which is invaluable in fostering trust and authenticity. The mean values for brand loyalty, ranging between 3.39 and 3.46, indicate a moderate

level of loyalty among Thai supermarket customers. This suggests that factors like service quality, product variety, and promotional campaigns play a role in maintaining consumer trust and loyalty.

Interactive campaigns are another effective way to deepen consumer engagement. Live streams showcasing behind-the-scenes operations, product launches, or cooking demonstrations provide real-time interaction with the audience. Polls, contests, and activities aligned with Chinese cultural values and festivals can strengthen emotional connections with the audience. These initiatives build excitement and foster a sense of community around the brand. However, the standard deviation in online purchase intention (mean values between 3.38 and 3.40) highlights diverse consumer views, suggesting a need for further exploration into individual preferences, brand reputation, and the influence of targeted marketing campaigns.

Loyalty programs integrated with social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo can significantly retain customers. Suppliers can nurture a sense of appreciation and long-term loyalty by rewarding users for engaging with brand content or sharing reviews. Emotional branding, supported by compelling storytelling around themes like local sourcing, sustainability, and community welfare, can create deeper emotional bonds with customers, making them more likely to remain loyal.

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