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Digital marketing and business growth in the coffee shop sector

Marketing digital y crecimiento comercial en el sector de cafeterías

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the relationship between digital marketing and business growth in the coffee shop sector in Peru. The methodology was applied, with a quantitative approach, correlational scope, and a non-experimental, cross-sectional design. The sample consisted of 350 customers of the Nativa coffee shop in the city of Huánuco, Peru, who were administered a structured questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale. The findings show that digital marketing is not statistically significantly related to the coffee shop's business growth ($r = 0.093$; $p = 0.083$), which is why the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that digital marketing is a favorable tool for business management; however, its contribution to growth needs to be integrated with the customer experience and customer loyalty.

Keywords: digital marketing, business growth, coffee shop, social media, digital advertising.

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo determinar la relación entre el marketing digital y el crecimiento comercial en el sector de cafeterías en el Perú. La metodología fue de tipo aplicado, con enfoque cuantitativo, alcance correlacional

y diseño no experimental de corte transversal. La muestra estuvo conformada por 350 clientes de la cafetería nativa en la ciudad de Huánuco, Perú, a quienes se les aplicó un cuestionario estructurado con escala tipo Likert de cinco niveles. Los hallazgos muestran que el marketing digital no llega a relacionarse de manera estadísticamente significativa con el crecimiento comercial de la cafetería (r = 0,093; p = 0,083), motivo por el cual se acepta la hipótesis nula y se descarta la hipótesis alternativa. Se concluye que, el marketing digital constituye una herramienta favorable para la gestión comercial; sin embargo, su contribución al crecimiento requiere articularse con la experiencia de consumo y la fidelización de los clientes.

Palabras clave: marketing digital, crecimiento comercial, cafetería, redes sociales, publicidad digital.

Introduction

In recent years, digital marketing has become a key tool for commercial communication, driven by the growing use of online platforms to search for information, compare products, and make consumption decisions. Its importance is also evident in the competitiveness of the food-service sector and in the way it strengthens the connection between brands and their customers through digital content and interaction, a dimension particularly relevant for coffee shop businesses (Masfer & Helmi, 2025; Singh et al., 2024; Sharma, 2025).

In many food-service establishments, however, digital media are still used without a clearly defined plan, which undermines content coherence, customer interaction, and the effectiveness of promotions. This is far from ideal, since digital marketing only truly benefits small and medium-sized enterprises when it responds to well-defined strategic objectives. Coffee shops, in this sense, stand to gain considerable commercial reach by managing their social media, visual content, and promotional campaigns in a more organized way. When these tools are instead applied in isolation or improvised on the fly, their impact on customer acquisition, loyalty, and positioning tends to diminish, especially against competitors with a stronger digital presence (Sharabati et al., 2024; Achmad et al., 2024).

A number of studies have examined the connection between digital marketing and commercial development in coffee- and food-related businesses, showing that social media use is tied to improvements in product promotion and sales (Dueñas-Mendoza & Zaldumbide-Peralvo, 2024). Digital communication through social media, in turn, has been shown to spur consumers' interest in visiting these establishments (Anugrah & Andaresta, 2023). In the coffee industry specifically, Instagram marketing activities help build brand equity (Sosa et al., 2025). Finally, digital content and viral marketing strategies reinforce trust, brand recognition, and customer loyalty in *coffee shops* (Sudarta & Mahyuni, 2024).

Within the Peruvian context, examining digital marketing in local food-service businesses is particularly relevant given the growing access to the internet and the widespread use of social media among coffee shops nationwide. In the Huánuco region, specialty coffee shops have increasingly carved out a niche as spaces that offer not just coffee but an experience tied to product origin, quality of service, and local identity. In the case of Nativa, a specialty coffee shop in the city of Huánuco, Peru, digital marketing appears to play a meaningful role in shaping how the business communicates its value proposition, attracts new customers, and maintains its relationship with those already familiar with the brand.

Building on this context, the study addressed the following general research question: What is the relationship between digital marketing and business growth in the coffee shop sector in Peru? Accordingly, the general objective was to determine the relationship between digital marketing and business growth within Peru's coffee shop sector. More specifically, the study sought to determine how content marketing, social media, and digital advertising each relate to business growth in this sector.

Theoretical and conceptual foundations

Digital marketing

Digital marketing encompasses the set of strategies carried out through online platforms to promote products, build brand presence, and engage with consumers. It has become an especially important tool today, as digital transformation has fundamentally changed the way organizations relate to their audiences through the use of interactive, personalized media (Swami, 2023; Nesterenko et al., 2023; Mukhtar et al., 2023).

In the food-service context, several studies indicate that digital marketing allows coffee shops to communicate their value proposition, promote their products, and stay closely connected with their customers; Instagram marketing activities, for instance, have been shown to strengthen brand equity in the coffee industry. Likewise, the strategic use of social media posts fosters customer engagement in restaurants and other food-service businesses (Park & Namkung, 2022; Manningham et al., 2024).

Business growth

Business growth, for its part, refers to the process through which a company expands its market share, strengthens its ties with customers, and improves its competitive standing. To this end, some small businesses have begun incorporating digital tools into their commercial strategy, as their use appears to improve communication and market visibility (Hajar et al., 2022; Amajuoyi et al., 2024; Yaghoobi et al., 2024).

In food-service businesses, this translates into the potential to attract new customers, retain regular ones, and stand out from the rest of the competitive landscape. Customer loyalty refers to the ongoing relationship between a business and its consumers, one that hinges on satisfying consumption experiences, trust, and perceived value (Mashchak, 2023; Rosário & Casaca, 2024; Purnami & Nurcaya, 2025). Market positioning, meanwhile, reinforces competitive advantage by establishing attributes the market comes to recognize. Business growth can thus be understood through customer acquisition, loyalty, and positioning, since these elements together capture a business's presence, permanence, and recognition within its competitive environment (Cikal, 2024; Jadhav, 2025).

Methodology

This study followed an applied research approach, aimed at generating knowledge with practical value for a specific situation. It also adopted a quantitative approach, since the data were processed statistically, and a correlational scope, given that the degree of association between variables was examined. The design, in turn, was non-experimental and cross-sectional, as the data were collected at a single point in time without manipulating any variables (Arias et al., 2022).

Non-probabilistic sampling makes it possible to select cases according to the characteristics of the study and the criteria the researcher establishes (Vizcaíno et al., 2023). Here, the population consisted of 350 customers of Nativa, a specialty coffee shop located in the city of Huánuco, Peru. Because it was possible to reach all of the customers identified, the sample ultimately comprised the same 350 participants. Data collection took place between April and June 2026.

The survey technique was used, with a structured questionnaire built on a five-point Likert scale as the instrument. The questionnaire was organized around two variables: digital marketing, comprising the dimensions of content marketing, social media, and digital advertising; and business growth, comprising customer acquisition, loyalty, and market positioning. Instrument reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding values of 0.887 for digital marketing and 0.906 for business growth, both indicating a reliable instrument.

Data were organized in Microsoft Excel and processed using SPSS version 26. The descriptive analysis relied on frequencies and percentages, while the inferential analysis began with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test; since the data did not follow a normal distribution, Spearman's rho, a nonparametric statistic, was used instead.

Results

The following section presents the results obtained from processing and analyzing the data collected through the questionnaire administered to customers of the Nativa specialty coffee shop.

Table 1

Distribution of sociodemographic data

Characteristic	Category	Freq.	%
Sex	Female	185	52.9
	Male	165	47.1
Age	18–25 years	78	22.3
	26–35 years	112	32.0
	36–45 years	89	25.4
	46 and older	71	20.3
District	Huánuco	115	32.9
	Amarilis	75	21.4
	Pillco Marca	60	17.1
	Tingo María	70	20.0
	Other	30	8.6

Source. Authors' own elaboration

The sociodemographic data show that the sample was predominantly female (52.9%), with the highest proportion of customers falling between 26 and 35 years of age (32.0%), followed by the 36-to-45 age group (25.4%). In terms of place of residence, most respondents came from the district of Huánuco (32.9%), followed by Amarilis (21.4%) and Tingo María (20.0%), which suggests that the coffee shop's clientele is concentrated in urban areas near the city center.

Table 2
Levels of the digital marketing dimensions

Dimension	Level	Customers	%
Content marketing	Medium	38	10.9
	High	312	89.1
Social media	Medium	29	8.3
	High	321	91.7
Digital advertising	Medium	39	11.1
	High	311	88.9

Source. Authors' own elaboration

Within the digital marketing variable, customers rated all three dimensions predominantly high: social media (91.7%), content marketing (89.1%), and digital advertising (88.9%). This suggests that customers view the coffee shop's digital initiatives favorably, with social media management standing out as the most highly rated of the three.

Table 3
Levels of the business growth dimensions

Dimension	Level	Customers	%
Customer acquisition	Medium	34	9.7
	High	316	90.3
Market positioning	Medium	26	7.4
	High	324	92.6
Customer loyalty	Medium	33	9.4
	High	317	90.6

Source. Authors' own elaboration

Within the business growth variable, market positioning received the highest rating (92.6%), followed by customer loyalty (90.6%) and customer acquisition (90.3%). These results suggest that customers regard the coffee shop as a well-positioned and recognized brand, although, as the inferential analysis revealed, this favorable perception does not necessarily translate into a statistically significant relationship with digital marketing.

Table 4
Normality Test — Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.	Distribution	Test Used
V1 – Digital marketing	0.095	350	0.000	Not normal	Spearman's rho
V2 – Business growth	0.106	350	0.000	Not normal	Spearman's rho

Source. Authors' own elaboration

Because both variables yielded significance values of 0.000, below the 0.05 threshold, the data were found not to follow a normal distribution; the correlation analysis was therefore carried out using Spearman's rho, a nonparametric statistic.

Table 5
General Hypothesis Results — Spearman's Rho Correlation

Relationship	Spearman's rho	Sig. (two-tailed)	N	Decision H_0
Digital marketing → Business growth	0.093	0.083	350	Fails to reject

Source. Authors' own elaboration

Spearman's correlation coefficient was ρ = 0.093, indicating a very weak positive relationship between digital marketing and business growth. The significance value, in turn, was p = 0.083, above the 0.05 threshold, meaning the relationship was not statistically significant. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted, leading to the conclusion that digital marketing does not bear a significant relationship to business growth at Nativa, the specialty coffee shop in Huánuco examined in this study.

Table 6
Spearman's Rho Correlations by Dimension

Relationship	Rho	Sig.	N	Decision H_0
D1 Content marketing → V2	0.062	0.247	350	Fails to reject
D2 Social media → V2	0.003	0.948	350	Fails to reject
D3 Digital advertising → V2	0.136*	0.011	350	Rejects

Source. Authors' own elaboration

Discussion

The results show that digital marketing does not hold a statistically significant relationship with business growth at Nativa, the specialty coffee shop in Huánuco. Although customers rated the coffee shop's digital initiatives highly on a descriptive level, the inferential analysis revealed that this favorable perception does not translate into a direct relationship with business growth. These findings diverge from those of Peemanee et al. (2025), who found a meaningful relationship between digital marketing and purchasing behavior in coffee shops. This discrepancy may stem from the fact that, at Nativa, purchasing decisions depend more heavily on non-digital variables, such as the in-person experience, product quality, and direct word-of-mouth recommendations.

As for content marketing, its relationship with business growth was weak, positive, and not significant, suggesting that visual quality, usefulness, and posting frequency were not decisive factors in this study. Social media likewise showed a virtually nonexistent, non-significant relationship, which contrasts with Salmiah et al. (2024), who argue that coffee shops have become an integral part of the modern lifestyle many consumers have adopted. This result might be explained, however, by the fact that customers use social media mainly as a source of information but base their purchasing decisions primarily on an in-person visit and personal experience.

Digital advertising was the only dimension to show a significant relationship, albeit a weak one. This finding aligns with Henríquez et al. (2021), who found that consumer behavior plays a considerable role in purchasing decisions across different sectors. Rancati et al. (2024) similarly attribute this kind of result to the weight of the physical experience in coffee shops, noting that prior visits, service quality, beverage quality, and price can carry more influence than digital communication when it comes to customer retention and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Conclusions

Although customers of Nativa, in the city of Huánuco, rated its digital marketing favorably, this variable showed no relationship with business growth, which appears instead to hinge on additional factors tied to the consumption experience, such as product quality and the service provided. Content marketing, in particular, did not show a significant relationship with business growth, suggesting that it should be paired with more explicit commercial actions.

Social media likewise showed no significant relationship with business growth, pointing to the need to integrate it with strategies focused on customer service, promotion, and overall experience. Digital advertising, meanwhile, was the only dimension that showed a significant, if modest, relationship, and should therefore be

paired with a solid commercial proposal of its own. Business growth at Nativa, in short, calls for closer alignment between digital strategy and the actual consumption experience.

As a limitation, these results reflect only the specific setting studied and the perceptions gathered during a particular period. Future research should consider expanding the sample and including businesses from other sectors, in order to examine commercial and behavioral variables capable of capturing their effects over time.

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