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# EFFECTS OF INVOLVEMENT ON THE LOYALTY OF SPECIALTY COFFEE CONSUMERS

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## Abstract

With continuing maturity of the coffee market, consumers have gone beyond the need for caffeine consumption and begun paying attention to coffee varieties, specific tastes of coffee from different places of origin, and information transparency in place-of-origin labels. This trend has not only changed the entire coffee market but also given birth to specialty coffee. In contrast to fast brewing coffee products available in convenience stores, specialty coffee emphasizes the acquisition of coffee expertise from an experiential activity. Notably, levels of customer involvement vary largely between individuals, greatly affect consumers' willingness to purchase and loyalty following such experiential activities. Few studies have explored this difference. Therefore, this study targeted specialty coffee consumer and explored the relationships between experiential marketing, consumer involvement, and consumer loyalty. The data collected using a questionnaire were processed using SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0 for statistical analyses. The results revealed significant positive relationships between experiential marketing, consumer involvement, and consumer loyalty. Consumer involvement increased when the coffee sellers had sufficient knowledge of specialty coffee. This in turn led to increased customer loyalty. In sum, coffee suppliers are recommended to pay attention to every detail of experiential activities and continually improve product quality, thereby enhancing their profits.

## Keywords

Experiential Marketing, Involvement, Loyalty, Specialty Coffee

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the increasing competition of coffee products in the beverage market can no longer be overlooked. Previously, drinking coffee in a café was considered a luxury leisure activity in Taiwan. However, this drink has boomed in popularity since affordable coffeehouse chains from the United States, Europe, and Japan established their first stores in Taiwan. Coffee is the most traded commodity globally after crude oil and a major tropical food ingredient worldwide. Since the 1990s, various coffeehouses have sprung up throughout every corner of Taiwan, resulting in the country having a high rate of growth in coffee consumption. A survey compiled by the International Coffee Organization revealed that Taiwanese people drink 2.85 billion cups of coffee every year, meaning that every citizen drinks, on average, 131 cups of coffee annually; the market is thus worth over NT\$70 billion. Another survey conducted by Starbucks reported that the coffee market had value of NT\$ 72 billion in 2018, and this figure was expected to exceed NT\$80 billion in 2019. With an annual growth rate of approximately 20%, the coffee market in Taiwan has continued to expand (Business Today, 2020). While coffee consumption continues to increase, businesses have striven to increase profits amid this "black rush" offering tremendous opportunities; this phenomenon has received substantial attention and warrants further investigation.

Conventional chains have experience increasing difficulty meeting consumers' requirements, and non-chain shops selling specialty coffee have become new favorites. The third wave of coffee, which began around the year 2000, demonstrated that the consumer preference has changed from commercial coffee produced by chain stores to specialty coffee with unique origin. Consumers now focus on relevant factors such as the origin, climate, altitude, soil type, and cultivation. This preference shift indicates that the factors affecting consumption patterns have changed from taste, smell, and commercial coffee blends to the characteristics of the place of origin and entire coffee production process. Unlike price-oriented business models, the business model of specialty coffee is quality-

oriented and characterized by low production with a high unit price. Consequently, the operation, market share, and market size of specialty coffee shops are much smaller than those of chain stores. These non-chain coffeehouse owners must create added value to attract consumers.

Studies have explored key success factors and the marketing of renowned coffeehouse chains and stylish cafes as well as the satisfaction of their customers, but researchers have rarely focused on non-chain specialty coffee shops. The specialty coffee market is undoubtedly expanding, and businesses have developed various strategies to respond to the trend. The hosting of coffee tasting courses, where the knowledge and tasting skills associated with specialty coffee are shared, is currently the most common method used by entrepreneurs to add value other than taste to specialty coffee. These courses help specialty coffee businesses portray their brand image and affect purchase intention and loyalty. Musa and Kassim (2013) emphasized that because consumer awareness has largely increased, conventional business models result in various challenges, with the concept of experiential marketing being increasingly valued by enterprises. Experiential marketing and the experience economy not only emphasize product quality and business profitability but also prioritize the pleasure perceived by customers during purchases (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013).

Businesses are greatly encouraged when their consumers feel happy and are willing to voluntarily share their experience in experiential activities. However, after experiential activities, consumer behavior is often polarized. Some consumers are willing to make purchases immediately and have strong repurchase intention. Conversely, some consumers, possibly because of low engagement, exhibit little purchase willingness, are not interested in attending subsequent activities, and are unlikely to make a purchase again. Accordingly, whether experiential marketing of specialty coffee products increases consumer involvement, purchase intention, and loyalty merits further attention.

In response to increasingly intense competition in the coffee market, businesses have developed countless marketing strategies to attract consumers. How appropriate marketing models can be applied to identify suitable operations, product differentiation can be achieved, potential consumers can be attracted, and a sustainable business model can be developed are factors deciding the success of a specialty coffee shop. This study aimed to determine the effects of experiential marketing and involvement on consumer loyalty by surveying consumers who participated in experiential activities hosted by specialty coffee shops. The results are expected to help specialty coffee entrepreneurs increase the loyalty and repurchase intention of their customers.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Specialty coffee

The term specialty coffee was first proposed by Erna Knutsen from the United States in a monthly issue of the *Tea & Coffee Trade Journal*; she stated that specialty coffee beans with unique flavor can only be cultivated with the most favorable microclimate, water, and soil. Later, when delivering a speech at an international coffee conference in Montreuil, France, in 1978, Knutsen indicated that businesses often neglected the quality of coffee and thus imported numerous inexpensive and poor-quality beans for roasting and sale. To improve the quality of coffee beans on the market at that time, she proposed the concept of specialty coffee. Specialty coffee, as the name suggests, relates to specific coffee beans, processing, and coffee extraction. Chang and Tan (2011) reported that as coffee became a global favorite, people began to emphasize coffee bean type, characteristics, and information transparency regarding the place of origin as well as when any given bean fits into the Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel and whether cultivation is organic and environmental friendly. Consumers also select simple coffee extraction methods without the use of machines to brew coffee for maximum flavor.

Coffee sales have continued to grow, and coffee bean imports have increased exponentially; since the birth of specialty coffee, of which professional brewing was the focus, coffee businesses have attempted to promote the mindset that coffee is more than just a drink and also represents a good life with great taste. Hung (2013) mentioned that specialty coffee beans are of unique varieties and are grown in special regions with favorable environmental conditions; careful harvesting practice, scientific processing, complex sorting, meticulous grading, exquisite roasting, a high standard of freshness, and perfect brewing are also ensured. However, a consistent standard and definition of specialty coffee have yet to be agreed. Even the definition proposed by Knutsen states that coffee can be called specialty coffee as long as clear information is provided on the beans' place of origin, cultivation quality is emphasized, and the coffee has regional characteristics (Wang, 2016).

Although there is high autonomy, high cost is the biggest challenge of running a specialty coffee business. Specialty coffee beans are of high quality and scarcity; thus, the cost of purchasing such beans cannot be decreased by bulk purchasing, affecting a business's potential net income and profitability (Ku, 2017). Additionally, Cheng (2018) discovered that expertise is crucial for specialty coffee shops. Because customers visiting such shops often emphasize the quality of coffee and may ask relevant questions, shop owners must have sufficient knowledge to provide a convincing answer. Moreover, consumers' emotions and perceived experience during consumption are affected by the five senses. If they do not gain a satisfactory impression and sensory experience when tasting specialty coffee, they may lose interest in specialty coffee because their expectations of the product have not been fulfilled; they may even lower their rating of specialty coffee. Therefore, sensory perception is the most

straight forward standard upon which consumers rate a product (Su, 2017).

## 2.2 *Involvement*

In marketing, consumers' involvement is often regarded as a critical factor influencing their willingness to purchase and behavioral responses. The concept of involvement was first proposed by Sherif and Cantril (1947) in their research on social judgement theory. They reported that involvement refers to the degree to which an individual perceives themselves connected to a specific event in a given scenario or for specific stimuli, with this connection triggering their interest in a related event. Involvement can be defined as a turbulent psychological state that is affected by various factors (Chih et al., 2010). Mittal and Lee (1989) stated that level of involvement refers to the interest expressed by consumers after perceiving the value of a target, where this target can be a product or level of engagement in decision making. Pan (2010) indicated that consumers tend to collect more information when evaluating a higher-cost or higher-risk product; they may also compare products from different brands. This behavior is high product involvement. By contrast, consumers making a purchase without making any evaluations indicates low product involvement. Overall, level of involvement can be defined as the time and effort that consumers are willing to spend on a product as well as their interest in learning about it (Huang & Fang, 2008).

To simplify classification of involvement levels, Houston and Rothschild (1978) divided level of involvement into three types, namely enduring, situational, and response involvement. Enduring involvement is long lasting and is present when consumers spend considerable time thinking about each product. Situational involvement refers to the relationship between a specified external goal and inherent product qualities and focuses on psychosocial, temporal, environmental, and geographical factors assessed by consumers when purchasing or using a product. Situational involvement is mainly affected by external situations. Response involvement refers to the psychological perspective toward a specific object or matter resulting from a combination of situational and enduring involvement. Response involvement reflects complex decision-making processes and extensive cognitive behaviors. Furthermore, depending on the individuals involved, Zaichkowsky (1986) divided involvement into three forms, namely advertisement, product, and purchase related. Advertisement-related involvement refers to the degree to which consumers care about the message delivered by an advertisement. Product-related involvement indicates the degree to which consumers value the product in question. Purchase-related involvement reflects whether consumers care about their consumption decision making or activities.

Chen et al. (2018) reported that experiential marketing was significantly positively correlated with product involvement, customer satisfaction, and loyalty; they also determined that involvement with Taiwan Beer products was significantly negatively correlated with brand loyalty. Providing clear product content and relevant product information can thus increase consumers' understanding of a target product, thereby enhancing their loyalty. In the present study, involvement was defined as consumers' interest in, caring about, need of, perception of the value of, and curiosity about a product.

## 2.3. *Experiential marketing*

Experiential marketing is a crucial tool in the era of the experience economy. Because of advances in information technology, enterprises are having to change their existing service-oriented business model into a model that satisfies the psychological needs derived from emerging consumption trends. In their study, Gautier et al. (2003) found out that 71% of chief executive officers believe that conventional marketing is no longer the only marketing approach and that experiential marketing will be the battlefield in the future. If enterprises can arouse certain emotions in consumers and give them pleasure and knowledge, consumers can perceive the attractiveness of a service or product and be motivated to make purchases. Poulsson and Kale (2004) reported that experience is a cocreation behavior between suppliers and consumers during which consumers perceive the value of the consumption experience provided by the supplier, with this experience then being remembered. Therefore, experiential marketing should, by emphasizing consumer-oriented experiences, regard consumers as rational and emotional decision makers who desire pleasant experiences. Businesses should also adopt flexible and diverse approaches to creating desirable experiences (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). During marketing, customer experience is the most essential element; thus, customer experience will be crucial in future competition.

Schmitt (1999) proposed three principles for successful customer experience creation, namely (1) coherence and consistency, (2) paying attention to the details of every experience medium, and (3) developing the potential of each experience provider to create a desirable experience. During experience creation, seven experience providers can be adopted (i.e., communications, visual and verbal identity, product presence, cobranding, spatial environment, website, and electronic media). Chen and Lin (2012) reported that customer experiences could significantly improve product marketing, although the marketing outcomes varied slightly between different products, sales channels, and experience approaches. Chi et al. (2016) discovered that experiential marketing positively affects customer satisfaction and loyalty and is affected by brand image. Another study identified that perception of experiential marketing can affect people's willingness to purchase and emotions (Chang, 2015).

Experience creation not only improves the impression a product gives but also provides a memorable consumption experience for consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Enabling individuals to observe or participate in activities, experiential activities offer comprehensive sensory experiences for customers, prompting them to identify with a brand, make purchases, or even rate the experiential activity they engaged in. Research on management, marketing, and consumer behavior has confirmed that experiential marketing has become a focal point among businesses. Questionnaire surveys of and interactions with consumers who have engaged in experiential activities enable the development of optimal experience approaches. The developed approaches can then be applied to the creation of specialty coffee experiences, helping businesses create high customer loyalty.

#### **2.4. Loyalty**

Loyalty refers to the degree to which consumers are willing to repurchase a product or service (Tao & Fan, 2015). Strong loyalty indicates that customers identify with or have a sense of belonging toward company employees, services, and products (Chang et al., 2019). Oliver et al. (1997) defined loyalty as the preference of customers for a particular brand after being affected by various factors in the external environment, stating that loyalty indicates the probability of repurchase and transactions (Rahman et al., 2014). Jones and Sasser (1995) divided loyalty into short-term loyalty and long-term loyalty. Short-term loyalty is lost once customers discover a better service or product. By contrast, long-term loyalty implies consumers' recognition of a product or service and that these consumers are willing to maintain a long-term interactive relationship with the brand in question. In such circumstances, customers do not easily change their brand preference (Tung & Chang, 2013). Dick and Basu (1994) suggested that loyalty represents the strength of the relationship between a customer's personal attitude and repeat patronage. Existing cognitive antecedents, affective antecedents, and external resistance are three factors affecting customer loyalty. Attracting new customers is now actually costlier than retaining existing customers. Therefore, enterprises have strived to maintain a high level of customer loyalty, the success of which depends on the relationship between an enterprise and its customers (Venkateswarlu et al., 2015).

Loyalty is mainly affected by customers' subjective thoughts and attitudes (Liang & Chang, 2018). Gremler and Brown (1996) proposed that loyalty comprises behavioral, cognitive, and affective loyalty. Behavioral loyalty refers to the actual consumption behavior exhibited by consumers; cognitive loyalty reflects consumers' intention to repurchase in the future; and affective loyalty indicates consumers' attitude toward an enterprise or manufacturer. A study demonstrated the positive effects of service quality on customer satisfaction (Lin et al., 2006); customer loyalty was also determined to increase with customer satisfaction. Another study reported that customer loyalty affects willingness to repurchase (Yang et al., 2020). Lin and Lee (2007) investigated four coffeehouse chains (Barista Coffee, IS Coffee, Dante Coffee, and Starbucks) and discovered that customer satisfaction positively affected word-of-mouth, repurchase behavior, self-reported loyalty, and tolerance of switching to a competitor; they found that the higher the satisfaction, the higher the loyalty.

After interacting with businesses, customers internalize their perceptions of the businesses' service or product and rate it. When a firm leaves a clear and positive impression on customers, decision-making uncertainty is likely to be lower (Cheng, 2016). In the decision-making process, the salesperson plays a crucial role and must constantly maintain the tie between their firm and customers, thereby increasing customer loyalty (Morrison & Crane, 2007).

### **3. Research methods**

#### **3.1. Research framework**

According to the aforesaid research background and motivation, this study aimed to explore the effects of experiential marketing on customer involvement and loyalty, with a particular focus on customer loyalty. Experiential marketing, involvement, and customer loyalty were regarded as the independent, mediator, and dependent variables, respectively.

#### **3.2. Hypotheses**

This study investigated the relationships between involvement, experiential marketing, and loyalty for specialty coffee. According to the literature review, three hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Experiential marketing significantly and positively affects involvement.

H2: Experiential marketing significantly and positively affects loyalty.

H3: Involvement significantly and positively affects loyalty.

#### **3.3. Research tools**

The questionnaire employed in this study comprised four sections. The first section contained 19 items and measured specialty coffee consumers' perceptions of experiential marketing. These items were revisions of those for the five measuring dimensions proposed by Schmitt (1999; i.e., sense, feel, think, act, and relate). The second section, comprising 12 items, measured the level of involvement of consumers. These items were revisions of those proposed by Tsai (2016), who studied the relationships between experiential marketing, community participation,

involvement, and willingness to purchase. The third section, regarding willingness to repurchase and price tolerance, consisted of 10 items and was developed by referring to the customer loyalty items proposed by Ku et al. (2013) and later revised by Chi et al. (2016). The items in these three sections were rated using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*); a high score indicated stronger agreement with the item in question. The final section collected the basic information of the respondents, namely their sex, age, monthly income, occupation, acceptable price of coffee beans per pound, and daily coffee consumption in cups (150 mL per cup).

### 3.4. Statistical population definition and sampling

The participants in this study were individuals who had attended a specialty-coffee-related experiential activity. A pretest was conducted by distributing the questionnaire to 67 respondents by using random sampling. After removing four samples with missing information and invalid answers, 63 valid samples were collected. The collected data were analyzed, and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of each variable exceeded the .7 threshold recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Subsequently, the formal survey was implemented.

## 4. Results

An electronic questionnaire was distributed to consumers who had attended specialty coffee experiential activities, with 333 responses received. After excluding nine questionnaires with inconsistent or incomplete answers, 324 valid responses were confirmed, a survey response rate of 97.3%. To achieve the research objectives and test the hypotheses, SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0 were employed. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and path analysis were performed.

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The collected data were processed using descriptive statistics to determine the demographic distributions and characteristics of the respondents. Among the respondents, men ( $n = 166$ ; 51.2%) accounted for slightly more than half (women:  $n = 158$ ; 48.8%). Almost half of the respondents were aged 46–55 years ( $n = 159$ ; 49.1%). The majority had a monthly income of NT\$30,001–NT\$60,000 ( $n = 164$ ; 50.6%), with the second most common monthly income being NT\$60,001–NT\$90,000 ( $n = 73$ ; 22.5%). The most common occupations were those in the service industry ( $n = 123$ ; 38%). Table 1 summarizes the collected information.

Item	Option	Frequency	Valid percentage
Sex	Male	166	51.2
	Female	158	48.8
Age	<25 years	14	4.3
	26–35 years	42	13
	36–45 years	80	24.7
	years	159	49.1
	>56 years	29	9
Monthly income (NT\$)	<30,000	46	14.2
	30,001–60,000	164	50.6
	60,001–90,000	73	22.5
	>90,001	41	12.7
Occupation	Student	5	1.5
	Military personnel, civil servant, or teacher	25	7.7
	Service industry	123	38
	Finance industry	26	8
	Agriculture, fishery, or animal husbandry	1	0.3
	Manufacturing industry	64	19.8
	House manager	16	4.9
	Freelancer	47	14.5
Retired or unemployed	17	5.2	

**Table 1. Sample structure and frequency distribution**

### 4.2. Reliability analysis

Each dimension was subjected to reliability analysis; the resultant Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients ranged between .947 and .955, exceeding the .7 threshold suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). These results demonstrated that the reliability of the questionnaire dimensions was high; Table 2 summarizes the reliability analysis results.

Dimension	Experiential marketing	Involvement	Loyalty
Number of items	19	12	10
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.955	0.947	0.954
Reliability (level)	High	High	High

Table 2. Reliability analysis results for the research dimensions

#### 4.3. Correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to determine correlations among experiential marketing, involvement, and loyalty. Experiential marketing was positively correlated with involvement ( $R = .729$ ;  $P < .01$ ) and loyalty ( $R = .743$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Involvement was also determined to be positively correlated with loyalty ( $R = .714$ ;  $P < .01$ ). These positive correlations signified that both involvement and customer loyalty increased with an increase in experiential marketing (Table 3).

Variable	M.	SD.	Experiential marketing	Involvement	Loyalty
Experiential marketing	4.2424	.54048	1		
Involvement	4.0471	.61177	.658**	1	
Loyalty	3.9515	.67427	.752**	.704**	1

Table 3. Correlations between research variables

Note: \*\* $P < .01$ 

#### 4.4. Multiple regression

To test the proposed hypotheses, this study calculated the goodness of fit between the sample data and constructed model.  $R^2$  indicated the statistical fit of the regression model, or the model explanatory power; it should generally be higher than .1. In addition, if the corresponding  $P$  value of a  $t$  value is smaller than .05,  $R^2$  indicates significant explanatory power. The research results in this study all met this requirement, indicating positive correlations between the variables. Therefore, H1–H3 were validated; the results are summarized in Table 4.

Hypothesis	Path	$R^2$	Beta	$t$ value	F	$P$ value
H1	Experiential marketing → Involvement	.432	.658	15.660	245.240	.001***
H2	Experiential marketing → Loyalty	.566	.752	20.472	419.096	.001***
H3	Involvement → Loyalty	.495	.704	17.765	315.604	.001***

Table 4. Multiple regression results for the research hypotheses

Note: \*\*\* $P < .001$ 

#### 4.5. Path analysis

Path analysis was first proposed by Wright (1921) for clarifying the causal relationship between genes and humans. By assessing the adopted model, this study determined that the reliability and validity of the scales measuring experiential marketing, involvement, and loyalty were satisfactory. Subsequently, path analysis was performed to facilitate structural modeling, determine the goodness of fit of the conceptual model, and test the proposed hypotheses. Path analysis revealed that the unstandardized path coefficient of specialty coffee experiential marketing to customer involvement was 1.248, and the corresponding variation explained was 47%. The path coefficient of experiential marketing to customer loyalty and corresponding variation explained was 1.043 and 69%, respectively. The path coefficient of involvement to customer loyalty was 0.372. These results confirmed the significant correlations among experiential marketing, involvement, and loyalty (Table 5 and Figure 1).

Dimension correlation	corr.	S.E.	$z$	$R^2$	$p$	Result
Experiential marketing → involvement	1.248	.186	6.711	0.47	***	Supported
Experiential marketing → loyalty	1.043	.166	6.299	0.69	***	Supported
Involvement → loyalty	.372	.060	6.211		***	Supported

Table 5. Unstandardized path analysis results for experiential marketing, involvement, and loyalty

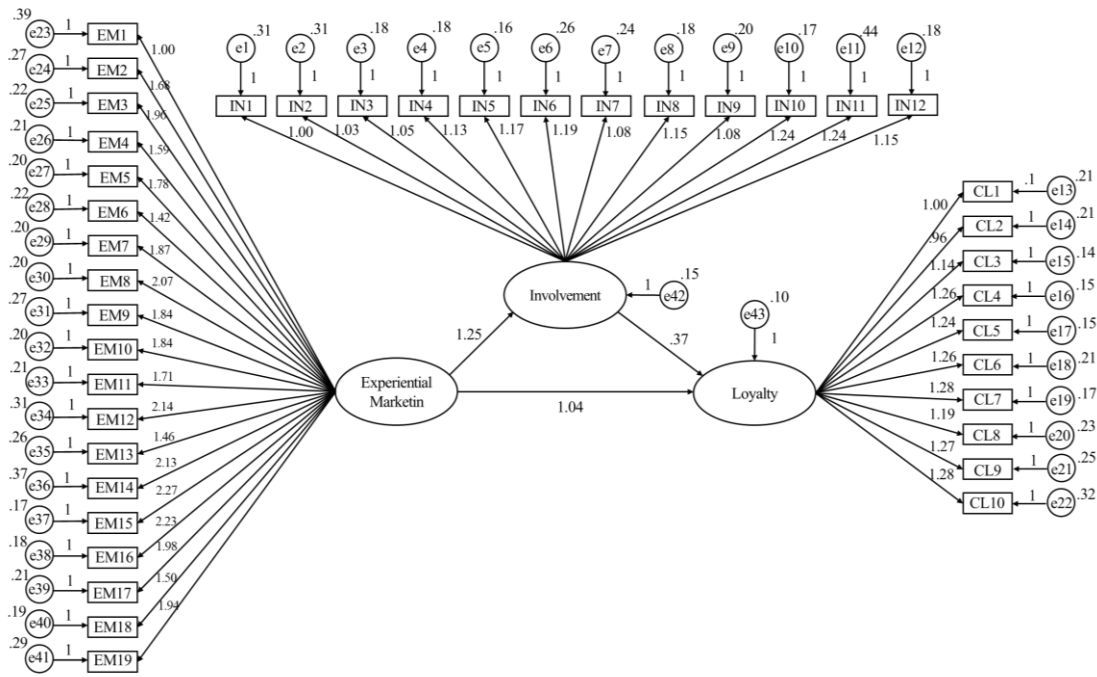


Figure 1. Unstandardized model analysis

Standardized path analysis revealed that the path coefficients of experiential marketing to involvement, experiential marketing to loyalty, and involvement to loyalty were .69, .55, and .35, respectively. The results reached the desired standard, indicating significant positive correlations among the three variables; Figure 2 summarizes the results of standardized path analysis.

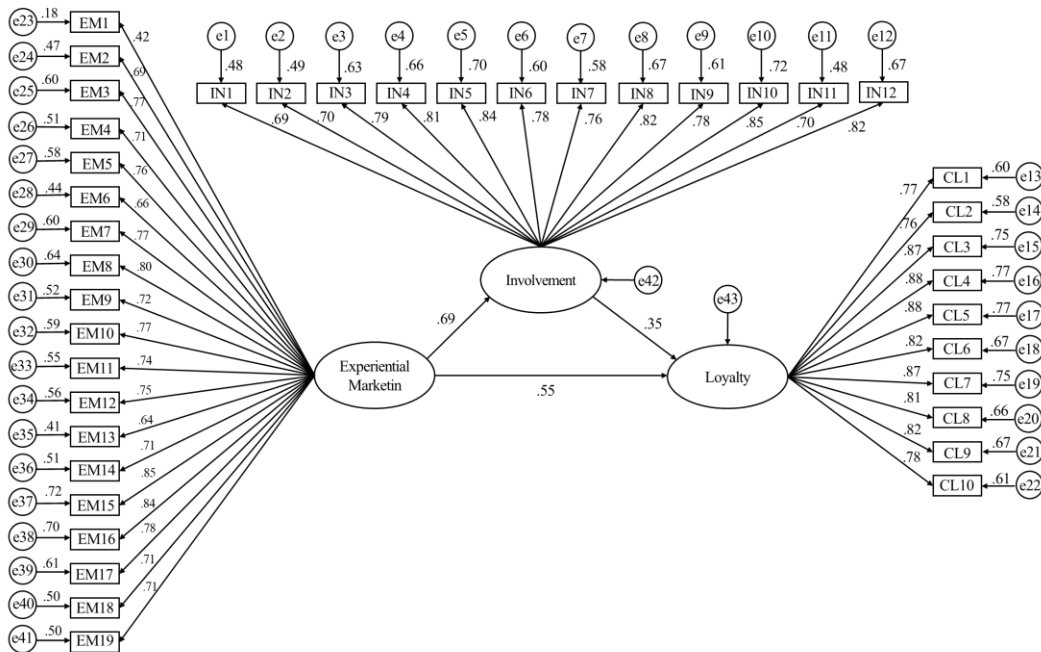


Figure 2. Standardized model analysis

### 5. Conclusion and suggestions

The global coffee industry is continuing to expand, and coffee products can be seen everywhere. Surviving in such a competitive market is a must-do task in each coffee business. In recent years, specialty coffee has become mainstream; consumers are no longer satisfied with commercial coffee and now emphasize beans with different roasts, specific tastes of coffee from different places of origin, and how organic and environmentally friendly beans

are. In such circumstances, businesses must realize that price is not the one and only factor that consumers care about. Instead, consumers demand more, including knowledge of, value of, and ideas behind coffee. Businesses that satisfy these demands can dominate the market. Experiential activities enable specialty coffee lovers to learn about coffee varieties, aroma, taste, flavor, and the production process; they give them joy; and they allow consumers to learn from other people and share their experience. However, the level of involvement varies between individuals, resulting in considerable differences in consumers' willingness to attend more experiential activities and make more purchases. Therefore, determining the effects of experiential marketing on involvement and loyalty among specialty coffee consumers is critical. This study explored these three variables after clarifying its research background and objectives through a literature review.

Regarding experiential marketing, this study discovered that experiential activities enabled consumers to maintain an interest in specialty coffee, provided sensory experiences, and gave an opportunity to interact with other coffee lovers. Accordingly, when training service staff, companies should help service staff acquire coffee knowledge and basic skills of client interaction as well as create novel experiences; this would leave activity participants with a favorable, long-lasting impression. Concerning involvement, the questionnaire respondents mostly perceived knowledge of how to brew a cup of specialty coffee as substantially valuable, were curious about new knowledge and relevant information, and believed that specialty coffee improved their quality of life. This study identified that coffee businesses must ensure that the participants in an experiential activity perceive the value of specialty coffee and find the activity enticing. Accordingly, we suggest that coffee businesses continually revise their experience programs to meet consumer needs and enhance their involvement. Regarding loyalty, when buying coffee or recommending coffee varieties to family and friends, the respondents prioritized specialty coffee. Enterprises could compile clients' data and regard people who keep purchasing their products as loyal customers. Loyal customers are those who will recommend products to family and friends. This in turn generates more customers with high loyalty.

Specialty coffee businesses put emphasis on achieving goals stage by stage. Because they know that long-term operation is necessary, specialty coffee providers tend to set short-, mid-, and long-term goals and accumulate loyal customers. This study discovered that people attended experiential activities for a variety of reasons. Before opening up an experience workshop, businesses should categorize consumers into different groups and customize each activity to a target segment of consumers. This approach enables businesses to enhance customer involvement and loyalty. The present researchers recommend that specialty coffeehouses meet their short-term goals by hosting experiential activities, improving the activity environment, imposing specific requirements regarding the professionalism and service delivery approaches of service staff, and gaining customers' recognition. Customers would then be willing to continue attending any experiential activities hosted by the coffeehouse. The mid-term goals should include establishing a service standard operating procedure, organizing experiential activities with the aim of building relationships with clients, and establishing a target number of loyal customers. The long-term goals should relate to branding, improving company image, increasing brand awareness, and establishing a comprehensive sales system, which would attract even more loyal customers and achieve sustainable operation.

The rise of specialty coffee has changed consumers' understanding of coffee and the value they attach to it. Determining consumers' characteristics can help coffeehouses run their business better, highlighting the importance of this study. However, further research is required to fill the research gap identified in the present study. The following suggestions are made for future studies: researchers can (a) study businesses that are unique, representative, and influential in the specialty coffee industry, (b) identify research dimensions associated with satisfaction and brand equity, and (c) conduct in-depth investigations of sensory, affective, thinking, action, and relational experiences. Moreover, specialty coffee consumers' thoughts, perceptions, and emotions may differ between individuals and cannot be clarified using a questionnaire. Therefore, we recommend that researchers extend the present research framework to conduct qualitative research or an in-depth study on consumers from various regions, thereby enhancing the generalizability and practicality of the study results.



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