RESEARCH ARTICLE

Factors Affecting Purchase Intention Towards Food Stores at OTOP Nawatwithi Tourism Community in Southern Thailand

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community is a local tourism route. Bringing both direct and indirect benefits to Thai society. However, tourists' purchase intentions need to be considered, which can be made under the influence of price or perceptions of quality, value, or any other customer's satisfaction. This research is quantitative. The objective is to study the factors of store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing affecting the purchase intention towards the food store of the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in the southern region of Thailand. Data were collected from tourists who traveled to the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in the south. The Cochran method, a statistical formula, was used to calculate the sample size of 385 people, ensuring a representative sample. The researcher increased the sample size to 490, using a non-probability sampling method, and setting quotas to store data. By dividing the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in the southern region into 14 provinces, 417 sets of complete data were returned. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze hypotheses using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result reveals that store atmosphere ($\beta = 0.532$, $t = 10.206$), perceived value ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 3.542$), and digital marketing ($\beta = 0.170$, $t = 2.944$) have a positive effect on the intention to purchase food in the food store of the OTOP Nawat tourism community. This result reflects the priorities that stakeholders like food store owners, community leaders, and local government officials should pay attention to increase the overall income for the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is significant to Thailand's economic system as it benefits society. The National Tourism Development Plan No. 3 (2023-2027) focuses on building strength by promoting modern domestic tourism through digital technology and innovation to promote the sustainability of the tourism industry based on the integrity of natural resources and the environment. Efficient community

tourism can help create prosperity and reduce inequality. (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). When talking about the tourism community, the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the community. Being a popular tourist attraction, there are operational processes in various areas, including developing tourism personnel, tourist attractions and facilities, and tourism products and services that link to the local community. The 20-year national strategy (2018–2027) has a conceptual framework for building economic strength and sustainable competition. The important direction is the development of the grassroots economy in developing and promoting community tourism by developing OTOP with innovation, adding value, and integrating communities by creating charm, uniqueness, and a valuable community way of life. Focusing on selling products in the community creates an opportunity for tourists to meet the villagers who are the sellers by distributing income to general entrepreneurs. Emphasize that everyone can join and learn to create income immediately to strengthen the community, reduce inequality, and create a better quality of life in the community to be happier. One of the important processes is the development of tourism in the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community, focusing on improving products to be suitable for the target group of tourists, such as products and services like food with local flavors in every tourism community area in the country. Especially in regions with many tourists, like the southern part of Thailand. (Office of Promotion of Local Wisdom and Community Enterprises, Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, 2023).

The south is the region that receives the highest number of tourist arrivals compared to other regions in Thailand. It has beautiful scenery such as beaches, sea, islands, and waterfalls, and it also has traditions, interesting culture, and delicious food with local and natural cooking. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2023). In the southern region, the local cuisine invariably highlights its diversity. This diversity becomes a valuable asset for communities seeking to attract tourists, as each local food scene boasts a unique character. It is a testament to the rich culinary heritage passed down through generations. Utilizing indigenous ingredients and herbs, a myriad of dishes are prepared, offering a glimpse into the cultural fabric of each community through their choice of raw materials or distinctive flavors. (Wanpen Kuansaman, Prapassorn Wisetprapha, and Phuchit Phuripanik, 2022), From past studies, it was found that the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community still has problems with unstable income from the spending of tourists, including the problem of creating awareness of the value of the community's unique traditions, culture, and wisdom (Khongphan & Sitthijirapat, 2023). Creating a good atmosphere, like the cleanliness of the area and the price of products sold, is also a limitation of marketing channels to create accessibility to tourist groups, which will further create purchasing intent (Rattaphon Suwanprasom, 2023).

It was found that factors affecting purchase intentions include store atmosphere (Solihin, Ahyani & Setiawan, 2021; Tansya, Semuel & Adiwijaya, 2019; Suprina, Rikzani & Sihite, 2020), perceived value (Dam, 2020; Chae, Kim, Lee & Park, 2020; Yuan, Wang & Yu, 2020; Peng, Zhang, Wang & Liang, 2019; Savitri & Alhasin, 2022), and digital marketing (Kaihatu, 2020; Singh, Kushwaha, Chadha & Singh, 2021; Erlangga, 2021; Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022). This is because purchase intention indicates how confident consumers feel about purchasing a product or service. Consumers make buying decisions after searching for information to buy products that meet their needs and desires (Moslehpour, Ismail, Purba, & Wong, 2021). In addition, the store atmosphere also influences consumer purchasing intention because the excellent atmosphere can create an impression, attraction, and convenience for customers to purchase products and services happily. Therefore, it can be said that the

atmosphere of the store is useful in building the image and attracting the attention of customers (Suprina, Rikzani, & Sihite, 2020; Yanto, Yusniar, & Rauf Fajrunnisa, 2020). Perceived value is the price paid for a product or service. More broadly, perceived value is the amount a buyer pays to benefit from having or using a product or service (Dam, 2020). Additionally, digital marketing is also an essential factor affecting changes in consumer attitudes towards purchasing. Customers can access the market anywhere and anytime through an attractive web page or social media. Sellers can quickly interact with customers through various online platforms and media that guide purchasing (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022).

From the background and importance of the problems mentioned above, It was also found that there were relatively few studies related to factors affecting purchase intentions toward food stores at the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in southern Thailand. The researcher is therefore interested in studying how store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing affect the purchase intention of tourists traveling to the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in southern Thailand. The results of this study will help further develop food stores in OTOP Nawatwithi tourism communities in the southern region of Thailand and community food stores in other areas around the country.

Objectives

The objectives of this pivotal study were:

1. To study the influence of store atmosphere on purchase intentions towards food stores at the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in southern Thailand.

2. To study the influence of perceived value on purchase intentions towards food stores at the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in southern Thailand.

3. To study the influence of digital marketing on purchase intentions towards food stores at the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in southern Thailand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The government sector has a policy to reduce social inequality to generate income and economic prosperity. By allowing the private and public sectors to participate in joint operations with the government sector to achieve the vision of stability, prosperity, and sustainability, which is in line with the implementation of the One Tambon, One Product (OTOP) project that started in 2001 in every region throughout Thailand, However, the operation is only selling products from the community. The sales compete with the private sector and sell outside the community, which will sell for up to 3 months in a year and wait for buyers to join the event. An average of 5,000–10,000 people/time and income are laid on entrepreneurs, not everyone in the community. Moreover, after a few years, the income of entrepreneurs is low. Later, the concept of the OTOP project was adjusted in a new format, which creates opportunities for buyers or tourists to come and meet sellers or villagers who have the potential to sell their products or services so that income is not concentrated on entrepreneurs. Everyone in the community can learn or participate in activities to generate immediate income, so this new concept called "OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community" helps strengthen the community to reduce inequality and make the quality of life of people in the community happier. The OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community positively impacts the community in three main areas: 1) Adjusting products to be innovative by emphasizing uniqueness and local

wisdom, creating OTOP to have more styles of souvenir products. 2) There is no need to travel outside to sell things by adding value and community charm, including tourist attractions, culture, wisdom, and good home ownership, and 3) creating marketing channels linked to tourism. It was stated that there are 584 OTOP Nawatwithi tourism communities in the southern region of Thailand, distributed in 14 provinces. These are different according to the context of the area, such as the Ban Lemed community in Surat Thani province, where Ban Lemed is a wide field area suitable for farming palm oil plantations and an agricultural community whose occupation is rice farming. Organic gardening is notable for its local foods that can only be eaten locally, like Khanom Ko, Pad Thai Chaiya, and salted eggs. Ban Ao Luek Noi in Krabi province is an affluent community in terms of both land and water. Peat swamp forests, caves, sea, Limestone Mountains, canals, swamps, and mangrove forests exist. Community products include shrimp paste, krill, dried wild yam, and sun-dried fish. (Office of Promotion of Local Wisdom and Community Enterprises, Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, 2023)

It can be seen that in every province of OTOP Nawatwithi, tourism communities in the south are different in terms of area, belief, religion, and culture, but the highlight of almost every place is similar in the form of food.

Purchase intention is a psychological force within a person. Consumer purchasing behavior can occur before and after being influenced by external stimuli in marketing and the environment. The stimulus is then processed according to personal characteristics before making the final purchase decision (Suprina, Rikzani, & Sihite, 2020). Similarly, Singh, Kushwaha, Chadha, and Singh (2021) stated that intending to buy is the intention to purchase something at a specified time or at a later time, which arises from knowing information about products or services from sellers, customers who have used the product or service, the approval of famous people, or other sources. Purchase intention is often related to consumer behavior, perception, and attitude. Purchase behavior is essential for consumers to access and evaluate products and services; however, intention may change due to price or perceptions of quality and value. Consumers are also affected by intrinsic or extrinsic motivations during the purchasing process. The six steps before buying a product or service are awareness, knowledge, interest, liking, persuasion, and purchase. Moslehpour, Ismail, Purba, and Wong (2021) further stated that the intention to purchase indicates how confident a consumer feels about purchasing a product or service. Additionally, Curvelo, Watanabe, and Alfinito (2019) specified that purchase intentions can be influenced by different dimensions, such as compatibility and attitude that consumers have towards the product or service. This research, hence, classifies purchase intention as compatibility and attitude.

Atmosphere refers to the design of the environment, such as visuals, communication, lighting, music, and fragrance to stimulate customer perception, emotional response, cleanliness, music, temperature, lighting, colors, display/placement, and smell/aroma, which ultimately influence the purchasing behavior of consumers. The atmosphere in a store can be understood as structuring the interior and exterior spaces, which can create convenience for customers. The atmosphere created must be suitable for the target market and be able to attract consumers. Therefore, it can be said that the store atmosphere is useful in building the image and attracting the attention of customers (Suprina, Rikzani & Sihite, 2020; Yanto, Yusniar & Rauf Fajrunnisa, 2020; Nurudin, 2020; Kaunang, Tumbuan & Gunawan, 2021; Alimudin, Siahaan, Sukoco & Damayanti, 2023; Thirumalazhagan

& Nithya, 2020). The store's atmosphere can be divided into atmospheres inside and outside. The impressive atmosphere of a food store creates a positive experience for consumers, directly affecting their purchase intentions and decision-making process. The more extended customers stay in the store, the more likely they will continue to linger and spend more money.

Moreover, Suprina, Rikzani, and Sihite (2020) pointed out that store atmosphere influences purchase intentions in their study. This research has two components to measure: the atmosphere inside and outside the food store. Moreover, the research above on the relationship between store atmosphere and purchase intention mentioned this relationship. The researcher, therefore, expects that the store's atmosphere affects purchase intention in this study, leading to hypothesis 1.

Customer perception is one of the most important factors in consumer purchasing intention, where the perceived value is the consumer's overall evaluation of the usefulness of a product or service. The word value refers to a standard, rule, norm, goal, or ideal that serves as the basis for evaluative results. Value is thus an implicit criterion upon which individuals make preference judgments. These criteria guide people's behavior. In economic terms, value is often equated with utility or desirability, showing the price paid. In terms of the role of quality in perceived value, it is formally defined as a relationship between price, emotion, and social components (Peng, Zhang, Wang, & Liang, 2019). Perceived value is the price paid for a product or service. More broadly, perceived value is the amount a buyer pays to benefit from having or using a product or service (Dam, 2020). Curvelo, Watanabe, and Alfinito (2019 state that if consumers are aware of the benefits of food, they will be willing to pay a higher price for its value. Dam (2020) examined the impact of perceived value on consumers' purchase intentions within supermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, discovering that perceived value significantly influences purchase intention.

Similarly, Savitri and Alhasin (2022) affirmed that perceived value is crucial in shaping purchase intentions for products and services in Indonesia. This research classifies perceived value into three areas: price, emotional, and social. Besides, from the abovementioned research on the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention, the result of this research is that perceived value affects purchase intention, leading to hypothesis 2.

Digital marketing is a type of marketing that is widely used to promote products or services and reach consumers using digital channels. Many consumers can access information wherever and whenever they want through digital media. With the emergence of digital media, consumers don't just rely on what companies say about their brands. But they can also follow what the media, friends, associations, colleagues, etc. say. (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022; Mkwizu, 2019; Kaihatu, 2020; Putri, 2021). Additionally, digital marketing is a channel that marketers use to promote products and services to the market. It is a digital marketing assistant. Customers or consumers can access products or services through various channels, such as email marketing or social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Nowadays, social media is a platform for marketers to talk with consumers. It's a current trend and a fast-growing way to reach target consumers easily and efficiently. Moreover, electronic word-of-mouth marketing is incredibly powerful because it relies on the trust of people sharing information about a product, service, or brand with others, typically through conversations, recommendations, reviews, or social media posts. (Al-Azzam & Al-Mizeed, 2021; Alshaketheep, Salah, Alomari, Khaled & Jray, 2020). This research classifies digital marketing into electronic word-of-mouth marketing and social media marketing. Furthermore,

according to the study above on the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intent, the researcher thus expects that digital marketing affects purchase intention. This leads to hypothesis 3.

H1: Store atmosphere affects purchase intention towards food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community.

H2: Perceived value affects purchase intention towards food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community.

H3: Digital marketing affects purchase intentions towards food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community.
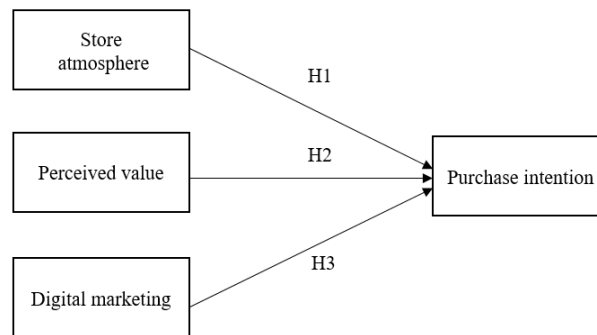

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODS

Population

This research focuses on tourists who visit the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in 14 provinces of southern Thailand. However, the exact number of tourists is unknown, as only the number of tourists who come to travel in the south was kept, with no data specifically on the number of tourists who visit the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in 14 provinces of southern Thailand.

Sample

The researcher has chosen Cochran's (1977) sample calculation method at a confidence level of 95%. After substituting the values, the sample size was 385 people. But setting the sample to be larger than the minimum sample will result in the stability of the analysis results because some of the collected questionnaires may be incomplete (Supamas Angsuchot, Somthawin Wichitwanna, and Ratchaneekul Pinyophanuwat, 2011), the researcher then increased the sample size to 490 samples, non-probability sampling and quota sampling were used to collect data by dividing the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in the southern region into 14 provinces, including the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in Krabi, Trang, Phang Nga, Phuket, Ranong, Satun, Chumphon, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, Phatthalung, Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, by collecting 35 sets of data per province, totaling 490 sets, but only 417 sets of complete data were returned.

Data collection

The researcher collected data from a sample group of tourists who traveled to visit the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community in the southern region of Thailand. Data was collected using a

combination of paper questionnaires and online forms (Google Form), ensuring a comprehensive collection process.

Data analysis

Analyze the general information of the respondents to know the characteristics of the sample studied, including gender, age, education level, occupation, and income, by finding percentage and frequency values. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to find the mean and standard deviation for purchase intention, store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing factors. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze hypotheses 1–3. The statistical significance level was set at the.05 level to test the influence of independent variable factors that affect the dependent variable factor.

Analysis software

The survey questionnaire data, collected with utmost care, was analyzed using the widely recognized and reliable Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This choice of software further ensures the accuracy and reliability of the research's findings.

Table 1. Components of the questionnaire

Variable		Items	Source	Adapt/Adopt
Purchase intention	Compatibility	3	Peña-García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela and Siqueira-Junior (2020)	Adapt
	Attitude	3		
Store atmosphere	Inside	4	Suprina, Rikzani and ihite (2020) and Kaunang, Tumbuan and Gunawan (2021)	Adapt
	Outside	3		
Perceived value	Price value	3	Peng, Zhang, Wang and Liang (2019) Watanabe, Alfinito, Curvelo and Hamza (2020) and Chae, Kim, Lee and Park (2020)	Adapt
	Emotional value	3		
	Social value	2		
Digital marketing	Electronic word-of-mouth marketing	3	Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed (2021) and Alwan and Alshurideh (2022)	Adapt
	Social media marketing	3		

Table 1. outlines the survey tool employed in this research, comprising four main variables with items sourced from previous studies. Specifically, six purchase intention items were adapted from Peña-García et al. (2020). Additionally, Suprina et al. (2020) and Kaunang et al. (2021) modified seven store atmosphere items. Eight perceived value items were drawn from Peng et al. (2019), Watanabe et al. (2020), and Chae et al. (2020). Lastly, six digital marketing items were adapted from Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed (2021) and Alwan and Alshurideh (2022). Rating by a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Babakus & Mangold, 1992).

RESULTS

This research employs multiple regression to analyze three hypotheses regarding the relationship between store atmosphere, perceived value, digital marketing, and purchase intention. Before interpreting the multiple regression results, the data underwent examination to confirm the normality and collinearity of the regression analysis.

Table 2. Respondents 'profile

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency (N = 417)	Percentage
Gender	Male	143	34.29
	Female	274	65.71
Age	< 30	58	13.9
	30-40	185	44.4
	41-50	111	26.6
	>50	63	15.1
Education	Primary - High school	32	7.7
	Diploma	87	20.8
	Bachelor's degree	233	55.9
	Postgraduate	65	15.6
Occupation	Student	69	16.5
	Government officials	102	24.5
	Company employee	159	38.1
	Personal business	27	6.5
	Other	60	14.4
Income	Less than or equal to 10,000 baht	53	12.7
	10,001-20,000 baht	72	17.3
	20,001-30,000 baht	102	24.5
	30,001-40,000 baht	69	16.5
	40,001-50,000 baht	54	12.9
	Higher than 50,000 baht	67	16.1

Table 2 presents a higher proportion of female respondents, 65.71%, compared to males, 34.29%. The largest portion of participants, 44.4%, falls in the 30–40 age range. Bachelor's degrees represent the majority of educational qualifications, accounting for 55.9%. Notably, a significant portion of the sample, 38.1%, are employed by companies, reflecting the relevance of this data. Most of these respondents earn an income of 20,001–30,000 Baht, comprising 24.5%.

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation, and reliability

Variables		No. of items	Mean (n = 417)	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
Purchase intention	Compatibility	3	3.42	0.91	0.872
	Attitude	3	3.49	0.89	0.869
Store atmosphere	Inside	4	3.49	0.87	0.873
	Outside	3	3.39	0.86	0.840
Perceived value	Price value	3	3.50	0.90	0.871
	Emotional value	3	3.41	0.87	0.853
	Social value	2	3.50	0.87	0.839
Digital marketing	Electronic word-of-mouth marketing	3	3.46	0.87	0.858
	Social media marketing	3	3.49	0.91	0.879

Table 3 displays the mean, standard deviation, and reliability measures. It outlines the mean and standard deviation for each component of the four variables. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.7, indicating satisfactory content reliability (Mosavi, Sangari, & Keramati, 2018).

Table 4. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate	Durbin – Watson
1	0.881	0.776	0.774	0.41021	1.749

Table 4 provides a summary of the model, including the Durbin-Watson statistic. When this statistic is close to 2 or falls within the range of 1.5 to 2.5, it indicates that the residuals are independent. In this study, the Durbin-Watson value was 1.749, which falls within this critical range. Therefore, it can be confidently concluded that the independent variables used in this research are unrelated.

Table 5. Impact of specific predictors of purchase intention

Predictors	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std.Error	Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.208	0.088		2.354	0.019*
Store atmosphere	0.554	0.054	0.532	10.206	0.000*
Perceived value	0.216	0.061	0.211	3.542	0.000*
Digital marketing	0.171	0.058	0.170	2.944	0.003*
R =0.881; R^2=0.776; R^2_{adj} =0.774; F=476.096					

Note: * shows $p < 0.05$

Table 5 demonstrates the analysis of the model's three independent variables (store atmosphere, value perception, and digital marketing) and their impact. A positive correlation between store

atmosphere and purchase intention was observed (β = 0.532, t = 10.206, p = 0.000), thereby solidly validating hypothesis 1. Moreover, the influence of perceived value on purchase intention was found to be significant (β = 0.211, t = 3.542, p = 0.000), thus confirming hypothesis 2. Lastly, the impact of digital marketing on purchase intention was also significant (β = 0.170, t = 2.944, p = 0.003), thereby providing strong support for hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION

The ambiance of the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community's food store in southern Thailand significantly influences purchasing intentions. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that positive beliefs or attitudes drive behavioral motivation. Indicating that a favorable store atmosphere correlates with an increased likelihood of food purchases, which is similar to Karundeng, Munizu, Kespandiar, Chusumastuti, and Wardana (2023), who conducted their study at food stores in Indonesia and found a significant impact of store atmosphere on purchase intention. Furthermore, this study identifies two key aspects of store atmosphere. Firstly, the interior of the community food store should prioritize cleanliness, be acceptable in temperature, offer a unique scent, and feature appropriate lighting or colors that are consistent with the community's identity. Secondly, the exterior should be adorned to reflect the community's distinctiveness, evoking a natural ambiance that immerses tourists in the local environment.

The perceived value affects purchase intention towards food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. This is also consistent with the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which states that if consumers perceive high value in a product or service relative to its cost, they are more likely to intend to purchase it. This aligns with the TPB's emphasis on behavioral intentions being influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This is consistent with Bushara, Abdou, Hassan, Sobaih, Albohnayh, Alshammari, and Elsaied (2023), who conducted their study at a casual-dining restaurant in Saudi Arabia, and the result indicated that perceived value enormously improves customer purchase intention. From the findings of this study, value perception consists of three aspects. Firstly, price value: community food stores need to serve appropriate food, like fresh ingredients, that is unique and not expensive compared to other food stores in general. Secondly, the emotional value of a food store should impress tourists by providing excellent service while maintaining the community's identity through its dress, language, and behavior. Lastly, social values like making tourists feel that the community food store is a part of a community. Giving them a community story from the picture or wording means that they support the community and society when they eat at the community food store.

Digital marketing affects purchase intentions towards food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. According to the theory of planned behavior, various human behaviors that occur with intention typically arise from attitudes, norms, and perceptions, like seeing pictures and videos from digital marketing channels of community food stores and intending to purchase food. So, planned behavior comes from an attitude based on what we have seen, personal norms, and awareness of the value of food. This is consistent with the studies by Benjawan Patsamritthiphon and Maneekanya Nakamatsu (2023), who conducted the survey in Bangkok, Thailand, and found a similar relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention.

Moreover, digital marketing consists of two aspects. Electronic word-of-mouth marketing needs to review their community food store more in digital media channels such as Line, Facebook, TikTok, or IG to share the experiences of other tourists with digital media and prospective customers to visit and purchase the food later. Another aspect is social media marketing, as food stores need to send information or promotions about community food stores through advertising on social media such as TikTok, Facebook, or IG. Moreover, the food stores can also use social media to contact customers and give them a way to inquire about or order food.

CONCLUSION

This research study, conducted with meticulous attention to detail, examines factors affecting purchase intention toward food stores in southern Thailand's OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. Its objectives include exploring factors of store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing influencing purchase intentions and gathering general tourist information, such as gender, age, education, occupation, and income. Most respondents were female, aged between 30 and 40 years, holding bachelor's degrees, employed in companies, and earning an income of 20,001–30,000 Baht. Furthermore, the study analyzed three main factors affecting tourists' purchase intention when visiting community food stores in Southern Thailand: store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study utilized questionnaires as the primary data collection tool and employed SPSS for data analysis. The sample group comprised 417 tourists visiting the OTOP tourism community in southern Thailand.

The results of this study hold significant implications for stakeholders in the tourism industry. The study found that store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing all play a crucial role in influencing purchase intention. However, digital marketing and perceived value had apprehensive impacts on purchase intention; digital marketing (β = 0.170) was deemed the primary concern, followed by the perceived value (β = 0.211), indicating these two factors have a comparatively lower influence on purchase intention compared to store atmosphere factors (β = 0.532). These findings can guide stakeholders in the tourism industry to focus their efforts on enhancing store atmosphere, which has the highest influence on purchase intention, and to consider the potential drawbacks of digital marketing and perceived value.

Practical and theoretical implications

The findings indicate that food stores in the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community have the potential to attract tourists through their adaptability and hospitality, particularly in adjusting flavors like spicy, salty, and sweet to cater to different tastes. This enables tourists, even those unfamiliar with local cuisine, to enjoy dishes made from unique community ingredients. Additionally, food stores must create a pleasant atmosphere inside and outside their premises by ensuring cleanliness, delightful aromas, and distinctive features like scenic sea views, waterfalls, or parks. Furthermore, food stores should focus on conveying the value proposition of their offerings, emphasizing the uniqueness of their ingredients and flavors, and even reflecting the local lifestyle through staff attire. For example, staff could wear traditional Thai clothing, or uniforms with local motifs. This helps tourists feel satisfied in supporting the community by patronizing these establishments. Leveraging digital marketing is also essential for promoting food stores within the community. By adopting these strategies, a positive reputation and word-of-mouth can be cultivated among potential tourists,

encouraging them to visit the community's food stores, engage in other activities, and purchase additional local products and services.

The study significantly advances our theoretical understanding by highlighting the importance of purchase intention and the specific challenges food stores encounter within the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. It contributes to theoretical understanding by exploring how store atmosphere, perceived value, and digital marketing can enhance purchase intention. This emphasis on these aspects signifies a significant theoretical advancement, reflecting the shifting priorities of stakeholders such as food store operators, community leaders, and local government officials striving to boost income within the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community and the broader tourism sector in southern Thailand.

Limitations and future directions

This quantitative study reflects the tourists' perspectives in expressing their opinions and ideas, fostering a sense of appreciation for traveling to the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. This inclusive approach strengthens community bonds and promotes sustainable development within the OTOP Nawatwithi tourism community. Moreover, to enhance clarity, the study's sample should be segmented. This segmentation would facilitate a targeted analysis of the factors impacting purchase intentions among tourists across various age ranges, income rates, and occupational categories, further involving and valuing the diverse audience.

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