



## The influence of content marketing and destination branding on consumer preferences at garland barnville

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### ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the influence of content marketing and destination branding on consumer preferences at Garland Barnville, a Swiss-themed cafe in Garut. Using a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM on 100 respondents, findings reveal that both content marketing ( $\beta = 0.524$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and destination branding ( $\beta = 0.391$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly and positively affect consumer preferences, with an overall explanatory power of 75.4%. These results indicate that consumer attraction shaped not only by product quality but also by visual narratives and destination identity, thereby reinforcing the relevance of the “experience economy” perspective. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by extending destination branding and content marketing research into the thematic cafe sector, an area underexplored compared to mainstream tourism. Practically, the findings provide implications for managers, emphasizing the need to balance aesthetic storytelling with core product quality to ensure sustainable competitiveness and repeat visits.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, cafes have evolved beyond their traditional role as venues for serving food and beverages. They have become integral elements of urban and semi-urban lifestyles-functioning not only as places for relaxation or business meetings, but also as spaces for self-expression, remote work, and digital socialization. Aesthetic value, comfortable ambiance, and experiential quality have emerged as key factors influencing consumer interest (Akhirin et al., 2023). This phenomenon aligns with studies indicating that modern consumers increasingly select hangout locations based on their visual appeal and shareability on digital platforms (Desita & Dewi, 2022). Furthermore, cafes now serve as “third places”-neutral environments beyond the home and office that promote social interaction and productivity.

In Garut Regency, data from Open Data Jabar (2025) shows a recent decline in the number of culinary establishments such as cafes, restaurants, and food stalls. However, this trend does not necessarily indicate waning public interest in cafes as lifestyle hubs or tourism alternatives. On the contrary, the competitive market has led to

a growing emphasis on thematic cafes with distinctive concepts and strong visual identity (Septiani & Arini, 2024). The emergence of such concept-driven cafes, like Garland Barnville, demonstrates how culinary entrepreneurs in Garut are adapting by prioritizing branding strategies and customer experience (Armstrong & Kotler, 2021). This local trend reflects a global shift in the food and beverage industry, where business sustainability increasingly depends on differentiation through lifestyle narratives and aesthetic value (Wiedmann et al., 2021).

This shift also reveals that consumer attention is no longer focused solely on taste or culinary innovation. Instead, ambiance, design, and shareability have become critical components in determining a cafe's attractiveness. According to Pine and Gilmore's Experience Economy theory (1998), modern consumers seek "shareable" experiences—explaining the popularity of visually distinctive and "Instagrammable" cafes. In this context, a cafe's success is no longer measured solely by the quality of its menu, but also by the strength of its visual identity and online reputation. Research by Lim & Rasul (2022) reinforces this, finding that cafés with attractive designs tend to attract more visitors even when food quality is considered average. However, Armstrong & Kotler (2021) warn that an imbalance between visual appeal and product quality may lead to long-term dissatisfaction. For example, a study by Nurazizah et al. (2025) on Garland Barnville revealed that excessive focus on aesthetics without menu innovation led to a drop in repeat customers after only six months of operation.

Garland Barnville's popularity is primarily driven by its 'Instagrammable' Swiss-themed design, with viral content emphasizing ambiance more than culinary quality. This trend reflects a shift in consumer orientation, moving from culinary motivations toward visual consumption preferences.

This shift raises important questions about consumer preferences, defined as individual choices and inclinations based on perceived value, personal experience, and anticipated satisfaction. In Garland Barnville's case, preferences appear to be driven more by ambiance and destination branding than by culinary quality. This may pose a long-term challenge for business sustainability, particularly if core products (i.e., food and beverages) are overshadowed by ephemeral aesthetic experiences.

These evolving preferences are closely tied to the marketing strategies adopted by businesses. In the context of themed cafés like Garland Barnville, two strategies are particularly relevant: content marketing and destination branding. Both play a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences and generating initial interest. Content marketing, as defined by Zambrano & Calderón (2025), is a strategic approach to consistently producing and distributing valuable content to attract and retain a targeted audience. Garland Barnville actively employs Instagram and TikTok to highlight its ambiance, scenery, and curated photo spots, with content that is both emotional and visually engaging—resonating strongly with digital-native audiences.

Meanwhile, destination branding involves the strategic development of a place's identity and public image to generate appeal, reputation, and differentiation (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). Garland Barnville has succeeded in establishing a brand identity of a "Swiss atmosphere in Garut," blending exotic cultural elements with local natural landscapes. This branding positions the cafe not merely as a dining venue, but as an experiential destination.

While these strategies have effectively boosted popularity and foot traffic, they may inadvertently shift consumer focus away from core offerings. Studies by Abashidze (2024) warn that excessive emphasis on ambiance can reduce product engagement, a phenomenon referred to as the "Instagrammable cafe paradox." This paradox has been observed in Bangkok, where 40% of thematic cafes experienced declines in food and beverage sales despite rising visitor numbers (Jirojkul et al., 2021).

Therefore, while destination content and branding can shape consumer perceptions and purchase behavior, they must be carefully balanced. Preferences are

increasingly determined by a holistic experience-including ambiance, visual cues, and storytelling-rather than by product quality alone. Consequently, a well-aligned implementation of content marketing and destination branding is essential to attract consumers while preserving the core identity of the business.

The selection of Garland Barnville as the research site, in contrast to other themed cafes in Garut Regency, is grounded in its distinctive role as a thematic cafe that has rapidly gained prominence. Unlike most cafes that primarily rely on a relaxing atmosphere or signature menus as their main attraction, Garland Barnville integrates a strong destination branding concept with a comprehensive visual content strategy on social media. Beyond providing a dining experience, the cafe constructs a consistent visual narrative that distinguishes it from competitors. This distinction positions Garland Barnville as a highly relevant case study, as it reflects the emerging dynamics of the local culinary industry, which is increasingly shifting from purely gastronomic functions toward lifestyle experiences and destination identities.

Accordingly, this study is titled “The Influence of Content Marketing and Destination Branding on Consumer Preferences at Garland Barnville.” The research aims to identify the marketing elements that most significantly shape consumer preference shifts and to develop strategies that effectively align visual appeal with culinary quality. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for Garland Barnville’s managerial practices while contributing to the broader advancement of destination marketing scholarship within the culinary business landscape. Ultimately, this study offers a conceptual understanding of the interplay between content marketing and destination branding in shaping consumer preferences and proposes strategic, applicable recommendations for ensuring the sustainability of thematic cafes in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research methodology refers to a systematic scientific approach employed to obtain data for specific objectives. Such data are subsequently utilized to address research questions, test hypotheses, or develop relevant theories (Sugiyono, 2022). This study adopts a descriptive quantitative approach to examine the influence of content marketing and destination branding on consumer preferences at Garland Barnville Cafe. The quantitative approach was selected as it enables testing of causal relationships among variables, whereas the descriptive dimension aims to systematically characterize the observed phenomena (Sugiyono, 2020).

Respondents were determined using a non-probability sampling technique through purposive sampling (Sarstedt et al., 2017) with specific criteria: male and female participants aged 13–60 years, active users of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or websites related to Garland Barnville Cafe promotions, and domiciled either in Garut or outside Garut. These criteria ensured the inclusion of respondents who were genuinely relevant to the research context, namely consumers or visitors exposed to the café’s digital promotions.

Primary data were collected through a structured Google Form questionnaire employing a Likert scale, complemented by field observations to directly assess consumer behavior on-site. Secondary data were obtained from literature reviews, scholarly articles, promotional reports, and relevant media documentation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). The questionnaire comprised 31 items measured on a Likert scale, including 8 items for content marketing, 12 items for destination branding, and 11 items for consumer preferences. Observations were conducted to gain a direct understanding of consumer behavior and their responses to Garland Barnville Cafe’s digital promotions and destination branding strategies.

Before distribution, the questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing using SmartPLS software, encompassing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and

composite reliability analyses. The results indicated that all items met the required thresholds (Hair et al., 2022), validating the instrument's appropriateness. The sample size was set at 100 respondents, consistent with the minimum recommendation for Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to ensure adequate statistical power.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 3.0, beginning with evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, followed by assessment of the structural model (inner model) to examine the strength of relationships among latent variables using  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  values, as well as hypothesis testing via bootstrapping. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its flexibility in handling complex models, robustness with non-normally distributed data, and suitability for relatively small sample sizes (Ramayah et al., 2018). Furthermore, this method is appropriate for exploratory research aimed at developing new theoretical insights (Hair et al., 2022).

The analysis was designed to evaluate the validity and reliability of constructs, assess the strength of relationships among latent variables, and demonstrate the influence of content marketing and destination branding on consumer preferences in the context of Garland Barnville Cafe.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Result of the Respondent Demographics

This study collected demographic data from 100 respondents, covering gender, age, social media usage, and domicile, as summarized in Table 1

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	68	68%
	Male	32	32%
Age Group	13-25	56	56%
	26-35	40	40%
	36-50	2	2%
	51-60	2	2%
Social Media	Instagram	29	29%
	Tiktok	62	62%
	YouTube	7	7%
	Website	2	2%
Domicile	Garut	80	80%
	Outside Garut	20	20%

Source: Processed data, 2025

From 100 respondents, the majority were female (68%), with the dominant age groups being 13–25 years (56%) and 26–35 years (40%), indicating that the product is more relevant to young female consumers. In terms of social media usage, TikTok emerged as the primary platform (62%), followed by Instagram (29%), while YouTube (7%) and websites (2%) accounted for only a small share. This suggests that TikTok is the most effective channel for marketing communication, whereas Instagram remains important for maintaining visual brand identity. Furthermore, 80% of respondents resided in Garut and 20% outside the region, highlighting the product's strong presence in the local Garut market.

#### 3.2 Discussion on Outer Loadings Analysis Results

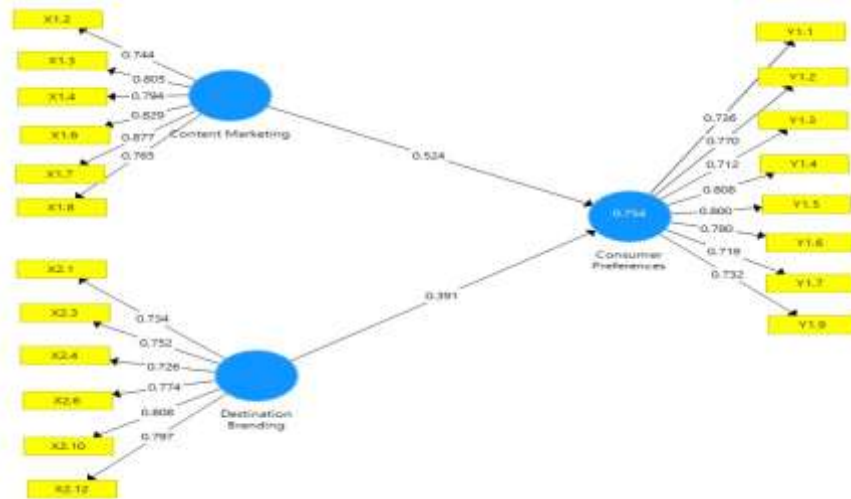


Figure 1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model - Measurement Model)

Based on the image above, the outer loadings analysis for all indicators shows that 20 out of 31 total indicators achieved loading values > 0.7. This indicates that these indicators meet the threshold value and are considered valid in measuring their respective constructs.

3.3 Result of the Convergent Validity

Table 1. Value (AVE)

Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Content Marketing	0.574
Destination Branding	0.646
Consumer Preferences	0.587

Source:Output Data, 2025 (Processed)

Based on the analysis above, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct met the convergent validity criterion. All AVE values exceeded the 0.50 threshold. This means each construct can explain more than half of the variance in its indicators, reliably measuring the construct it represents. Once convergent validity was established, the next step involved testing discriminant validity through Cross Loadings. The Cross Loadings values are presented in the following table:

3.4 Result of the Discriminant Validity

Table 2. Value Cross Loadings

Variabel	Indikator	Outer Loadings	Keterangan
Content Marketing	CM 2	0.774	Valid
	CM 3	0.805	Valid
	CM 4	0.794	Valid
	CM 6	0.829	Valid
	CM 7	0.877	Valid
	CM 8	0.765	Valid
Destination Branding	DM 1	0.734	Valid
	DM 3	0.752	Valid
	DM 4	0.726	Valid

	DM 6	0.774	Valid
	DM 10	0.808	Valid
	DM 12	0.797	Valid
	CP 1	0.736	Valid
	CP 2	0.770	Valid
	CP 3	0.712	Valid
Consumer Preferences	CP 4	0.808	Valid
	CP 5	0.800	Valid
	CP 6	0.780	Valid
	CP 7	0.719	Valid
	CP 9	0.732	Valid

*Source:Output Data, 2025 (Processed)*

The convergent validity test results in Table 2 indicate that the correlation between the item/instrument scores and their respective construct scores (loading factor) met the criteria, with each instrument's loading factor exceeding 0.7. Therefore, the instruments are deemed valid.

### 3.5 Result of the Composite Reliability

Table 3. Reliability Value

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Content Marketing	0.894	0.915
Destination Branding	0.890	0.916
Consumer Preferences	0.859	0.860

*Source:Output Data, 2025 (Processed)*

Referring to the table above, each construct in the model demonstrates Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values greater than (>) 0.70. This indicates that every construct possesses high reliability and sufficient internal consistency.

### 3.6 Result of the Analisis Inner Model

Table 4. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
NFI	0.766	0.766

*Source:Output Data, 2025 (processed)*

The Normalized Fit Index (NFI) ranges from 0 to 1 and is calculated by comparing the hypothesized model with the independent model. An NFI value of 0.766 indicates that the model has a good level of fit.

### 3.7 Result of the R-square

Table 5. R Square

R Square (R2)	R Sqaure Adj
0.754	0.749

*Source:Output Data, 2025 (Processed)*

Based on the data analysis above, the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.754 indicates that Content Marketing influences Consumer Preferences by 75.4%. The remaining 24.6% is influenced by other factors or variables not included in this study.

### 3.8 Result of the hypothesis testing

Table 6. hypothesis testing

Construct	Original Sample	T- Statistics	P- Value
Content Marketing -> Consumer Preferences	0.524	6.591	0.000
Destination Branding -> Consumer Preferences	0.391	4.363	0.000

Source: Output Data, 2025 (Processed)

#### a. Content Marketing on Consumer Preferences

Based on the analysis above, the influence of Content Marketing on Consumer Preferences shows a positive and significant relationship. A path coefficient of 0.524 indicates that Content Marketing has a strong and positive effect on Consumer Preferences, meaning increased Content Marketing activities substantially boost Consumer Preferences. The t-statistic of 6.591 far exceeds the critical t-table value (1.984) at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , demonstrating that this result is statistically significant. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000, which is less than  $\alpha=0.05$ , further confirms that this relationship is not due to chance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1). Therefore, we can conclude that Content Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Consumer Preferences.

#### b. Destination Branding on Consumer Preferences

Based on the analysis above, the influence of Destination Branding on Consumer Preferences shows a positive and significant relationship. A path coefficient of 0.391 indicates that Destination Branding has a moderately strong and positive effect on Consumer Preferences, meaning increased Destination Branding activities substantially boost Consumer Preferences. The t-statistic of 4.363 far exceeds the critical t-table value (1.984) at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , demonstrating that this result is statistically significant. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000, which is less than  $\alpha=0.05$ , further confirms that this relationship isn't due to chance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1). Therefore, we can conclude that Destination Branding has a positive and significant influence on Consumer Preferences.

### 3.9 Discussion

#### a. The influence of content marketing on customer preferences

Content Marketing substantially impacts customer preferences, especially within the tourism industry. This is primarily due to its inherent ability to shape brand perception, facilitate audience engagement, and present relevant, valuable information. A concrete example relevant to this study is the success of Garland Barnville Cafe in Garut, which consistently leverages visual-based content marketing strategies through platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This cafe highlights an aesthetic Swiss-themed ambiance, complete with rustic architecture, mountain landscapes, and photo spots specifically designed for social media content. This approach has proven effective in capturing market attention, particularly among younger generations who are highly influenced by visual experiences when deciding where to visit. Consumers are drawn to the cafe not solely because of the quality of its culinary products, but rather due to the visual narrative and destination image successfully built through content marketing.

This finding is supported by previous research. Zhu, (2025) Demonstrates that engaging visual content can enhance consumers' positive perceptions of a business establishment, thereby driving their preference to visit.

furthermore, Ali Akbar Husein & Dwi Asri Siti Ambarwati (2025) found that experience-based content marketing strategies play a role in creating emotional engagement, which ultimately influences consumer preferences and loyalty. Alamayreh et

al. (2025) This is further reinforced by stating that visual design promoted through social media significantly influences consumer preferences, even surpassing product quality as a factor. Meanwhile, Desita & Gusti Ayu Ketut Rencana Sari Dewi (2022) This also confirms that content marketing is effective in driving consumer preferences and loyalty, especially in experience-based industries like culinary and hospitality.

However, this finding is not fully consistent with previous studies, which suggest that content marketing does not always significantly influence consumer preferences unless supported by other factors, such as product quality, service, or consumer trust. Razak et al. (2024) This states that digital marketing activities, including content marketing, don't directly influence preferences or purchase decisions without strong consumer trust. In line with this, (Joko Prabowo & Desi Harsoyo (2023) This also found that product design and content marketing don't significantly influence consumer preferences if not accompanied by adequate product innovation and service quality.

A similar thing was conveyed by Rika Hubbina et al. (2023) This states that variations in product design and content marketing don't necessarily have a significant impact on consumer preferences if not supported by clear product strength and a strong value proposition. Listania & Zulfahmi (2023) This also reveals that the influence of content marketing is smaller compared to the direct experience consumers have in a physical store. Finally, Wiedmann et al. (2021) This emphasizes that both destination branding and content marketing have limited influence if not accompanied by a satisfying actual experience for consumers.

Therefore, while this study's findings support most previous research on the positive influence of content marketing on customer preferences, Garland Barnville Cafe's success in Garut demonstrates that visual appeal, compelling narratives, and destination branding are effective in capturing initial consumer attention. However, this influence will be more optimal and sustainable if consistently supported by product quality, service, and tangible experiences.

#### b. The influence of destination branding on customer preferences

These findings confirm that destination branding has a positive and significant influence on customer preferences at Garland Barnville, Garut. As a themed cafe embracing the visual concept of "Swiss van Java," Garland Barnville leverages destination branding to cultivate an image as a unique tourist destination and culinary spot in Garut. The cafe's success in attracting consumer attention through strong atmospheric branding on social media illustrates how destination branding shapes consumer perceptions and preferences, especially among younger generations who prioritize visual experiences and unique ambiances when choosing places to visit.

These findings align with several previous studies demonstrating that destination branding positively influences customer preferences. Research by Jirojkul et al. (2021) This emphasizes that strong destination branding creates significant differentiation in consumers' minds, thereby influencing their interest and preference to visit a place. Ralph Ian Jake P. Araña & Dr. Teresita Q. Adriano (2025) This also found that a strong destination image significantly shapes positive consumer perceptions and drives their loyalty, even more than the quality of products offered. Furthermore, research by Abashidze (2024) This shows that a strong and consistent brand image in destination branding can influence consumer decisions, especially in the tourism and culinary sectors. Similar findings were revealed by Asan et al. (2024) This states that a well-managed destination image will increase consumer preferences by creating clearer expectations of the experience.

However, this finding isn't entirely consistent with some other studies indicating that destination branding doesn't always significantly influence customer preferences, especially when not supported by an adequate actual experience. Chen & Indrianti (2022) This found that destination branding, without strong product or service quality, often

fails to significantly influence consumer preferences. It also mentioned that visual destination branding doesn't significantly impact consumer decisions if not accompanied by the quality of the actual experience offered.

#### c. Limitations

This study has limitations in terms of the small sample size 100 respondents using purposive sampling, a single research object Garland Barnville, and data collection methods limited to online questionnaires and brief observations. The variables examined only covered content marketing and destination branding, while other factors such as product quality, service, and word of mouth may also influence consumer preferences. The short research period further restricted deeper exploration. Future studies are recommended to use larger samples with probability sampling, include multiple comparative objects, and apply mixed methods to enhance external validity.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study indicates that content marketing and destination branding exert a positive and significant influence on consumer preferences at Garland Barnville. Content marketing has been shown to shape brand perception and capture consumer attention through visually aesthetic and emotionally engaging content, while destination branding successfully establishes a distinctive destination image that enhances the cafe's attractiveness as both a culinary and tourism destination. The PLS-SEM analysis further demonstrates the substantial contribution of these two variables to consumer preferences, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.754, signifying that 75.4% of the variance in consumer preferences can be explained by content marketing and destination branding, whereas the remaining 24.6% is influenced by other factors. Thus, the effectiveness of Garland Barnville's marketing strategy depends on maintaining a balance between visual appeal, destination narrative, and product quality, which, if managed consistently, can strengthen competitiveness and ensure long-term business sustainability.

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