

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN MALAYSIAN COFFEE FRANCHISES: THE ROLES OF TRUST, INTERACTION, AND ENTERTAINMENT

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Abstract: Social media has become a powerful marketing platform that enables brands to engage directly with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. Through strategies such as interactive communication, entertaining content, online communities, celebrity endorsements, and trust-building activities, companies can enhance brand visibility, strengthen consumer trust, and foster meaningful relationships with their audiences. Previous studies have shown that social media marketing can significantly influence consumer buying behaviour. However, excessive marketing content may also encourage impulsive purchasing rather than cultivating long-term brand loyalty and sustainable consumer relationships. This study examines the relationship between social media marketing factors namely perceived trust, interaction, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement and buying behaviour among consumers of Malaysian coffee franchises and brands. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected through a questionnaire survey conducted between 2 November 2025 and 23 December 2025. A total of 210 valid responses were obtained and analysed using descriptive statistic and multiple regression analysis via SPSS. The findings reveal that three social media marketing factors; perceived trust, interaction, and entertainment have significant positive relationships with consumer buying behaviour. In contrast, online communities and celebrity endorsement do not demonstrate significant relationships with buying behaviour among the respondents. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on social media marketing by identifying the factors that most strongly influence purchasing decisions in the Malaysian coffee industry. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed to provide insights for researchers and marketing practitioners seeking to develop more effective and sustainable social media marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Buying Behaviour, Malaysian Coffee Brands, Consumer Behaviour, Coffee Franchises.

1. Introduction

In today's digital era, social media has become an important factor influencing consumer buying behaviour. It is widely regarded as a source of information about products, recommendations, and reviews that consumers voluntarily share following their purchases (Palalic et al., 2020). The level of confidence and trust consumers place in online information,

particularly information shared by their peers, influences their purchasing decisions, enhances brand reputation, and increases the likelihood of both initial and repeat purchases. In addition to trust and confidence, motivational factors such as informational and entertainment motivations have been shown to influence consumer buying behaviour. Previous studies have found a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchasing decisions (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018). Furthermore, social media is used not only for planned purchases but also for impulsive buying, often driven by brand familiarity, trust, and electronic word-of-mouth communication. Overall, social media marketing enables companies to reach specific consumer groups efficiently, creating opportunities for marketers to influence purchasing decisions through credibility, engagement, and interaction.

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a key business strategy for engaging consumers and building strong consumer–brand relationships. As a result, it has significantly transformed consumer behaviour and reshaped traditional marketing practices. Consumers increasingly use social media platforms to search for product information and share their experiences, prompting marketers to develop relevant, engaging, and shareable content (Sayabek et al., 2018). A strong social media presence allows brands to communicate with consumers in real time and in a personalised manner, making products more appealing and encouraging purchase behaviour (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018). Consequently, many organisations have increased their marketing investments in mobile and social media platforms, recognising their importance in brand development and market growth. The emergence of new media culture has also encouraged marketers to participate actively in consumers' digital environments in order to capitalise on these opportunities. By leveraging social media effectively, companies can create value for stakeholders, increase brand awareness, and strengthen consumer trust through user-generated feedback, reviews, and recommendations that influence purchasing behaviour (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021).

In Malaysia, the coffee franchise industry has experienced significant growth, and coffee consumption is projected to increase from 635,000 cups in 2020 to 800,000 cups in the future (Nik Rahimah Nik Omar et al., 2022). This growth is partly driven by the strong presence of social media, where brands compete to attract consumers through various digital platforms. The industry views social media as both an opportunity and a strategic tool for engaging consumers, particularly young and urban consumers who value the convenience of online information as well as the trust derived from peer recommendations (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021). Social media also plays an important role in fostering brand loyalty, as digital interactions often influence consumers' preferences for particular coffee franchises through reviews, influencer partnerships, and targeted advertising. The evolving digital culture that shapes consumer preferences has encouraged business-to-consumer (B2C) industries in Malaysia to prioritise personalised engagement and value creation through social media as a means of differentiating themselves in an increasingly competitive marketplace (An & Ngo, 2025). Therefore, understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour within the Malaysian coffee franchise industry is essential for businesses seeking to optimise their marketing strategies, strengthen consumer engagement, and enhance their market share.

2. Research Problem

In the highly competitive retail and food-and-beverage (F&B) sectors, brands must establish effective connections with consumers through social media marketing. Social media has enabled Malaysian coffee brands to increase their visibility and attract consumers through celebrity partnerships, online communities, interactive content, and engaging posts. While the shift towards digital platforms has created greater brand awareness, excessive exposure to promotional content may have unintended negative consequences. Consumers may become overwhelmed, irritated, or confused by the volume of marketing messages, potentially leading to negative perceptions of the brand (Zeqiri et al., 2025).

Understanding consumer buying behaviour has also become increasingly challenging, as consumers differ in their preferences, motivations, and purchasing habits. Moreover, constant exposure to marketing content on social media may encourage impulsive buying behaviour. Such behaviour occurs when consumers make purchasing decisions without careful consideration, which may subsequently lead to regret or dissatisfaction with their purchases (Chang et al., 2024). Consequently, consumers need to be mindful of their purchasing decisions to minimise potential negative outcomes. At the same time, brands and companies must develop a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour in order to support informed purchasing decisions, foster meaningful consumer–brand relationships, and contribute to a more sustainable marketplace.

Despite operating in a highly competitive environment, Malaysian coffee franchises continue to invest in social media strategies such as building trust, encouraging consumer interaction, and creating entertaining content to influence buying behaviour positively. In addition, online communities and celebrity endorsements are frequently used to strengthen consumer engagement and enhance brand visibility. However, there remains limited evidence that these strategies consistently translate into long-term brand loyalty. As noted by Adwa Qamarina Mohd Yusof et al. (2020), despite the continued growth of the coffee industry, many coffee brands face challenges in retaining customer loyalty over time.

Furthermore, the increasing volume of social media marketing content may result in excessive promotional exposure, which could encourage impulsive purchasing rather than fostering enduring brand loyalty and meaningful consumer relationships. As a result, organisations need to carefully design and manage their social media marketing strategies to maximise their effectiveness while minimising potential negative consequences. At the same time, although previous studies have examined the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour, limited empirical evidence exists on which specific dimensions of social media marketing (perceived trust, interaction, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement) most strongly influence buying behaviour among Malaysian coffee franchise consumers. Therefore, there is a need to examine how different dimensions of social media marketing influence consumer buying behaviour. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the relationship between social media marketing and buying behaviour among consumers of Malaysian coffee franchises.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that shape purchasing decisions. The consumer behaviour models proposed by Nicosia (1966) and Engel et al. (1995) explain how individuals process information, develop attitudes, and ultimately make purchasing decisions. These models suggest that consumer behaviour is shaped by emotional connections, social influences such as family and reference groups, and cognitive processes, including information processing and attitude formation. Typically, consumers go through several stages in the decision-making process, including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. Each stage is influenced by the availability and accessibility of relevant information.

The growth of online shopping has introduced new dimensions to consumer decision-making, as digital marketplaces have made the purchasing process more complex. According to Amin (2025), online shopping involves three key phases: searching for product information, sharing information, and making purchases. Younger consumers, in particular, are more likely to engage in online and mobile shopping due to their familiarity with digital technologies. Their purchasing decisions are influenced by factors such as ease of technology use, perceived risk, and the convenience of the shopping experience. In addition, consumers seek both utilitarian and hedonic benefits when shopping online, indicating that purchasing decisions are driven by both practical needs and enjoyment. Consumers are also more likely to purchase lower-risk products online, as they generally have greater confidence in the online purchasing process for such products compared to traditional in-store shopping (Hipólito et al., 2025).

Furthermore, social environments, cultural norms, and personal characteristics play important roles in shaping consumer buying behaviour. In collectivist societies, purchasing decisions are often influenced by family members, social class, and cultural values, highlighting the importance of social relationships in the decision-making process (Amin, 2025). Psychological factors such as motivation, perception, and attitudes also affect how consumers evaluate products and make purchasing decisions. Additionally, previous experiences with products and services influence future buying behaviour, as satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend preferred brands to others.

Roy and Datta (2022) describe consumer buying behaviour as a five-step process comprising need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. Understanding these factors is essential for businesses seeking to develop effective marketing strategies that align with consumer preferences and respond to changing market conditions. In the context of social media marketing, consumer buying behaviour is increasingly influenced by digital interactions, online reviews, social recommendations, and brand-generated content. As consumers rely more heavily on social media platforms for product information and purchase decisions,

understanding the factors that shape buying behaviour has become increasingly important for businesses, particularly in highly competitive industries such as coffee franchises.

3.2 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has become an essential business strategy for building strong relationships with consumers and influencing their purchasing decisions. It is particularly effective among younger consumers, who are more likely to engage with content that is relevant, interactive, and engaging. Content that encourages sharing and participation enables brands to expand their reach, strengthen customer engagement, and improve consumer relationships (Luo et al., 2026). In addition, the effectiveness of social media marketing is enhanced by the growing influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Consumer-generated content, such as online reviews, ratings, and social media posts, plays a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions and behaviours. As consumers often place greater trust in recommendations from friends, family members, and peers than in traditional advertising, eWOM provides brands with an effective means of building credibility and connecting with their target audiences. Consequently, social media serves not only as a communication channel for businesses but also as a platform through which consumers actively promote and endorse their preferred brands.

Social media marketing also enables businesses to cultivate emotional connections with consumers, which can contribute to greater brand loyalty. Through continuous interaction and engagement, brands can strengthen consumer trust and enhance brand influence, both of which are important drivers of loyalty (Abdullah & Faizal, 2022). Social media platforms provide opportunities for businesses to establish more personalised relationships with consumers by responding to enquiries, addressing concerns, and encouraging ongoing interaction. Such engagement helps foster stronger emotional bonds and encourages long-term customer loyalty. Furthermore, social media marketing allows organisations to collect valuable consumer data, enabling them to develop more targeted marketing strategies and strengthen brand awareness.

Despite its advantages, the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on how it is implemented. While consumers appreciate easy access to information and personalised communication, excessive promotional content may have adverse effects. Information overload resulting from frequent marketing messages can lead to consumer fatigue, reduced engagement, and negative perceptions of a brand (Arshad et al., 2026). Consequently, businesses must carefully manage their social media marketing activities to ensure that content remains relevant, engaging, and valuable to consumers. These findings suggest that marketers need to understand consumer preferences and continuously adapt their strategies to maintain consumer interest while avoiding the negative effects of excessive marketing exposure. Given its ability to influence consumer perceptions, trust, engagement, and purchase decisions, social media marketing has become a critical factor in shaping consumer buying behaviour, particularly in highly competitive consumer markets such as the coffee franchise industry.

3.2.1 Perceived Trust

Perceived trust is a critical factor in online purchasing, as consumers rely on trust to ensure that transactions are secure, reliable, and dependable. According to Indarsin and Ali (2017), trust arises when individuals are willing to be vulnerable based on the expectation that others will act positively and fulfil their obligations. In online environments, where consumers cannot physically inspect products before purchase, trust plays an essential role in reducing uncertainty and perceived risk. Consequently, digital businesses depend heavily on perceived trust to establish strong and lasting relationships with their customers.

Consumers' trust in an organisation significantly influences their purchasing decisions. For example, in the hospitality industry, digital technologies are used to enhance certainty and strengthen trust, thereby fostering long-term customer relationships (Anwar et al., 2024). Website quality and brand reputation are important determinants of trust, as well-designed and reliable websites increase consumers' confidence and encourage engagement and loyalty. Trust is further reinforced when consumers interact with established and reputable brands, increasing their willingness to make purchases. Therefore, successful online businesses must focus on delivering high-quality digital experiences that enhance consumer trust.

Perceived trust also plays a key role in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Setiawan and Achyar (2021) found that trust mediates the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention, suggesting that quality service encourages purchasing behaviour when consumers trust the provider. Similarly, Wong and Mo (2019) reported that consumers' perceptions of security influence their willingness to adopt mobile payment systems, which subsequently strengthens trust in the technology. Trust helps consumers manage perceived risks associated with online transactions and increases their confidence in the value obtained from purchases.

Research consistently demonstrates that consumers are more likely to make online purchases when they trust a website or platform. Higher levels of trust are associated with stronger purchase intentions and actual purchasing behaviour (Setiawan & Achyar, 2021). Consumers are also more willing to purchase products and services when they perceive website quality, brand reputation, and payment security to be reliable. Secure payment systems and transparent communication further enhance consumers' confidence in online transactions (Wong & Mo, 2019; Indarsin & Ali, 2017). In addition, Irshad et al. (2020) found that consumers' needs for social connection and personal control contribute to the development of trust, which in turn influences their purchasing behaviour. By creating trustworthy environments through secure technology, transparent communication, and customer-oriented practices, businesses can encourage purchasing decisions and foster long-term customer loyalty. In the digital marketplace, perceived trust remains a crucial factor linking consumer motivation and perceived value to purchasing decisions.

Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived trust and buying behaviour.

3.2.2 Interactions

Social media marketing enables two-way communication between brands and consumers, facilitating active participation and strengthening consumer–brand relationships. Consumers engage with brands through various activities, including liking posts, commenting, sharing content, and participating in brand-hosted online events. Such interactions allow organisations to develop and maintain long-term relationships with their customers (Wilopo & Nuralam, 2025). Consumer interactions on social media contribute significantly to relationship building and brand loyalty. Greater engagement often leads to stronger emotional attachment to a brand and encourages positive word-of-mouth communication. The design and presentation of content also influence engagement levels, as visually appealing content, concise messaging, and interactive media features are more likely to encourage participation. Consequently, social media interactions play an important role in shaping consumer buying behaviour and fostering long-term brand loyalty.

According to Sharmin et al. (2021), personalised content and engagement-driven communication help create deeper emotional connections between consumers and brands, resulting in higher levels of customer satisfaction. Through these interactions, consumers actively participate in information search and evaluation processes that influence purchasing decisions. Research by Wijaya et al. (2021) suggests that while social interactions contribute positively to brand loyalty, they do not necessarily result in direct sales growth. Nevertheless, social media engagement enhances consumers' confidence in a brand by addressing both functional and emotional needs. The interaction between brands and consumers therefore contributes to the development of lasting relationships that influence purchasing behaviour through a combination of information exchange and emotional experiences.

Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between interactions and buying behaviour.

3.2.3 Entertainment

Entertainment is an important component of social media marketing, as it provides users with enjoyable and engaging experiences. Entertaining content encourages consumers to spend more time on social media platforms by creating positive emotions and enhancing user satisfaction. As a result, marketers increasingly incorporate entertainment into their social media strategies to attract attention and strengthen consumer engagement (Noguti & Waller, 2020; Sheth & Kim, 2021). Entertainment also enhances the value of social media advertising. Consumers tend to respond more positively to advertisements that are perceived as entertaining rather than intrusive or disruptive. However, the effectiveness of entertaining content may vary across cultures and demographic groups, as audience preferences differ according to social and cultural contexts. Consequently, social media campaigns are likely to be more effective when entertainment elements are tailored to the interests and preferences of specific target audiences (Noguti & Waller, 2020).

Furthermore, entertainment contributes to the development of emotional connections between consumers and brands. Social media activities often serve as a source

of relaxation and enjoyment, leading users to spend considerable time on these platforms. When consumers derive positive emotions from entertaining brand content, they are more likely to develop favourable attitudes towards the brand and share content with others, thereby increasing brand visibility and potential sales opportunities (Sheth & Kim, 2021). Entertainment also supports consumer decision-making by increasing engagement throughout the purchasing process.

Entertaining content makes brand messages more appealing and encourages consumers to explore and evaluate products more actively. While entertainment has been shown to enhance customer engagement and brand loyalty, its direct influence on purchasing decisions remains inconsistent across studies (Sheth & Kim, 2021; Wijaya et al., 2021). Consumers' decisions are also influenced by factors such as perceived security, website usability, and willingness to adopt technology. Therefore, marketers should integrate entertainment with other influential factors, including perceived value and social influences, when designing content that effectively encourages purchasing behaviour across different consumer segments (Noguti & Waller, 2020).

Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between entertainment and buying behaviour.

3.2.4 Online Communities

Online communities consist of individuals who interact through digital platforms based on shared interests, experiences, or goals. These communities have become increasingly important in shaping consumer behaviour, supporting business strategies, and facilitating consumer–brand engagement. Online communities provide spaces where users can communicate, create content, exchange information, and participate in discussions, often acting as both content producers and consumers simultaneously (Wilopo & Nuralam, 2025). One of the most significant functions of online communities is their ability to facilitate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication. Members frequently share opinions, experiences, and product reviews that influence the purchasing decisions of other community members (Moisescu et al., 2025). Through these interactions, online communities shape consumer behaviour by providing information, creating social connections, and encouraging engagement throughout the purchasing process.

Research by Filieri et al. (2023) suggests that emotional attachment, social interaction, and cognitive engagement within online communities influence how consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, and assess products after purchase. Community members often share feedback and recommendations, which affect not only their own purchasing decisions but also those of other consumers. These interactions contribute to greater brand credibility and may encourage repeat purchases and long-term consumer engagement. In addition, online communities provide brands with valuable opportunities to obtain immediate consumer feedback, enabling organisations to adapt their business strategies, improve products and services, and better meet consumer expectations. Such interactions

can contribute positively to consumer buying behaviour and strengthen relationships between brands and consumers (Almarzoqi et al., 2025).

Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H4: There is a positive relationship between online communities and buying behaviour.

3.2.5 Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a widely used marketing strategy that aims to promote brands by attracting consumer attention and enhancing consumer engagement (Jun et al., 2023). Organisations frequently employ well-known personalities from the entertainment, sports, and media industries to increase brand awareness and encourage purchasing behaviour. As a result, celebrity endorsement has become a common practice in contemporary advertising and marketing campaigns (Bazi et al., 2020). This strategy is effective because consumers often perceive celebrities as more credible, trustworthy, and influential than non-celebrity endorsers, making them more receptive to marketing messages associated with these public figures (Aldajani & Daajani, 2019).

Celebrity endorsements can positively influence consumers' perceptions of brands and their purchasing decisions. Celebrities often serve as reference groups and role models, transferring their symbolic meanings, values, and social status to the brands they endorse. This process enhances brand image and creates favourable consumer attitudes towards the endorsed products (Firmanza & Artanti, 2022). When consumers observe a celebrity endorsing a product, they may develop a stronger desire to purchase the product due to their admiration for, or identification with, the celebrity. Furthermore, celebrity endorsements help create memorable advertisements that capture attention, increase brand recall, and encourage positive consumer engagement.

Previous studies have shown that celebrity endorsement can influence consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions. Consumers tend to perceive endorsed products more favourably because they associate the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity with the brand itself. The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is often influenced by factors such as the celebrity's reputation, attractiveness, expertise, and compatibility with the target audience, as these characteristics strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to both the celebrity and the brand (Aldajani & Daajani, 2019; Tian et al., 2021). Consequently, celebrity endorsement can increase consumer trust and encourage purchasing behaviour.

However, celebrity endorsement is not without risks. Negative publicity or controversies involving a celebrity may adversely affect consumers' perceptions of the endorsed brand and reduce consumer trust. Such situations highlight the potential vulnerability of brands that rely heavily on celebrity endorsements as a marketing strategy (Firmanza & Artanti, 2022). Despite these risks, celebrity endorsement remains an influential marketing tool that can shape consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions when implemented effectively. In the Malaysian coffee franchise industry, celebrity endorsements

may enhance brand visibility, strengthen consumer trust, and encourage trial purchases, particularly among younger consumers who are highly active on social media platforms.

Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H5: There is a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and buying behaviour.

4. Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a conceptual model that examines the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 is developed based on the dimensions of social media marketing and their potential influence on consumers' purchasing decisions. The study is underpinned by the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which explains how individuals actively select and use media to satisfy specific needs, including information seeking, social interaction, and entertainment. Unlike traditional media theories that focus on how media influence audiences, UGT emphasises how individuals use media to fulfil their personal goals and motivations. In the context of social media marketing, UGT provides a useful framework for understanding why consumers engage with social media platforms and interact with brand-related content. The theory suggests that consumers actively seek benefits from social media usage, such as acquiring information, building social connections, and obtaining entertainment, all of which may influence their purchasing decisions (Khan et al., 2021; Thomas, 2024).

Previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of UGT in explaining consumer behaviour on social media platforms. Zeqiri et al. (2025) found that consumers primarily use social media to search for product-related information, which assists them in making more informed purchasing decisions. Information obtained through social media can reduce uncertainty and support consumers throughout the decision-making process. In addition, entertaining content on social media can create positive perceptions of brands and increase consumers' motivation to engage with brand content before making purchase decisions (Pahrudin et al., 2025).

Furthermore, UGT suggests that consumers develop trust in brands through social interactions, online discussions, and the exchange of reviews and recommendations with other users (Thomas, 2024). Social media platforms also enable consumers to participate actively in content creation and sharing rather than merely consuming information. Research indicates that opportunities for personalisation and user-generated content contribute to stronger consumer engagement and greater brand loyalty (Khan et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2015). Consequently, marketers need to understand the motivations underlying consumers' social media usage and interactions in order to develop effective marketing strategies that encourage engagement and influence purchasing behaviour.

Drawing upon the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the empirical literature on social media marketing, this study proposes that perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement are important dimensions of social media

marketing that may influence consumer buying behaviour among Malaysian coffee franchise consumers. Based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the supporting empirical literature, Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework, in which perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement are hypothesised to positively influence consumer buying behaviour.

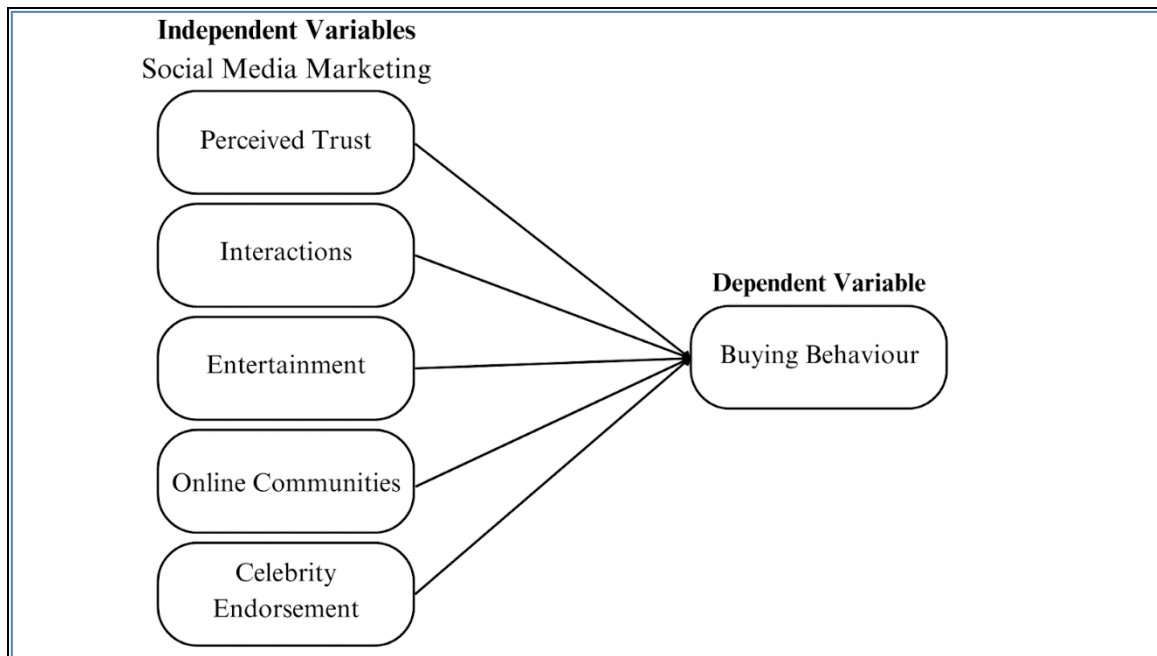


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

5. Research Methodology

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable in this study is consumer buying behaviour, while the independent variable is social media marketing, comprising five dimensions: perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents who met the specific criteria established for the study. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) Malaysian citizens; (2) consumers who have purchased coffee from coffee franchises operating in Malaysia, such as ZUS Coffee, Kopi Kenangan, Richiamo, and similar brands; and (3) users of social media platforms who engage with the selected coffee brands through social media. These criteria were chosen to ensure that respondents possessed relevant experience with both coffee franchise consumption and social media marketing activities. The research instrument was distributed digitally via a Google form link shared across various social media platforms such as Whatsapp and Instagram. All items in the instruments were adapted from established literature and were evaluated using a five-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Lastly, to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables, multiple regression analysis were done using SPSS version 30.

The study focused on Malaysian coffee consumers due to the rapid growth of the coffee industry in Malaysia. According to the World Coffee Portal and the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), Malaysians consumed an average of 2.2 kg of coffee per person in 2022, representing a 5.2% increase compared with 2017. In addition, Malaysian consumers are increasingly willing to pay for higher-quality and speciality coffee beverages, reflecting the continued evolution and expansion of the coffee market. The growing integration of social media into consumers' daily lives has further strengthened the connection between coffee brands and consumers, making social media marketing an important factor in shaping consumer behaviour and supporting a sustainable marketplace.

To determine the minimum sample size required for the study, an a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power version 3.1.9.7. With a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ and statistical power of .80, the analysis indicated that a minimum sample size of 92 respondents was required, consistent with recommendations for social and behavioural research (Hair et al., 2019). However, this study obtained responses from a total of 210 participants. Exceeding the minimum sample size requirement enhances the robustness and reliability of the findings and helps mitigate potential issues arising from incomplete, invalid, or unusable responses that may need to be excluded during data screening and analysis (Andrade, 2020). Therefore, the final sample of 210 respondents was considered sufficient to achieve the objectives of the study and provide reliable results for examining the relationship between social media marketing and buying behaviour among consumers of Malaysian coffee franchises.

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female, accounting for 63.8% ($n = 134$), while males represented 36.2% ($n = 76$) of the sample. With regard to generational groups, the respondents were predominantly from Generation Z, comprising 97.1% ($n = 204$) of the sample. Millennials and Generation X respondents each accounted for 1.4% ($n = 3$). In terms of monthly income, most respondents (68.6%, $n = 144$) reported earning less than RM1,000 per month. This was followed by 18.6% ($n = 39$) who earned between RM1,000 and RM2,500, and 9.5% ($n = 20$) who earned between RM2,500 and RM5,000. Smaller proportions of respondents reported monthly incomes of RM5,000–RM10,000 (2.4%, $n = 5$) and more than RM10,000 (1.0%, $n = 2$).

Regarding respondents' preferred coffee franchise or brand, ZUS Coffee emerged as the most popular choice, selected by 65.2% ($n = 137$) of respondents. This was followed by Gigi Coffee (11.0%, $n = 23$), Kopi Saigon (10.0%, $n = 21$), Kopi Kenangan (3.8%, $n = 8$), and Richiamo Coffee (1.9%, $n = 4$). In addition, 8.1% ($n = 17$) of respondents selected "Others", which included brands such as Bask Bear, San Francisco Coffee, and Kopikku. In terms of coffee expenditure, the majority of respondents (58.6%, $n = 123$) spent between RM8 and RM12 per purchase. This was followed by 31.0% ($n = 65$) who spent between RM12 and RM16. Smaller proportions spent between RM5 and RM8 (9.5%, $n = 20$) or less than RM5 (1.0%, $n = 2$). None of the respondents reported spending more than RM16 on a coffee purchase.

Finally, regarding the frequency of purchasing coffee from their preferred franchise or brand, the largest group of respondents reported purchasing coffee twice a month (37.1%, n = 78). This was followed by respondents who purchased coffee once a month (22.4%, n = 47), once a week (21.0%, n = 44), and two to four times a week (17.6%, n = 37). A small proportion reported purchasing coffee once a day (1.4%, n = 3), while only one respondent (0.5%) indicated purchasing coffee more than once a day. Overall, the sample was predominantly composed of female Generation Z consumers with relatively low monthly incomes, who preferred ZUS Coffee and typically spent between RM8 and RM12 per coffee purchase. Most respondents purchased coffee either once or twice a month, reflecting moderate consumption patterns among Malaysian coffee franchise consumers.

Table 1: Demographic Profile Analysis

Demographic profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	76	36.2
	Female	134	63.8
Generation	Gen X	3	1.4
	Millennials	3	1.4
	Gen Z	204	97.1
Monthly Income (RM)	Less than RM1,000	144	68.6
	RM1,000 - RM2,500	39	18.6
	RM2,500 - RM5,000	20	9.5
	RM5,000 - RM10,000	5	2.4
	More than RM10,000	2	1.0
Favourite coffee franchise/brand	ZUS Coffee	137	65.2
	Kopi Saigon	21	10.0
	Gigi Coffee	23	11.0
	Kopi Kenangan	8	3.8
	Richiamo Coffee	4	1.9
	Others	17	8.3
Average amount (RM) spent on coffee	Less than RM5	2	1.0
	RM5 - RM8	20	9.5
	RM8 - RM12	123	58.6
	RM12 - RM16	65	31.0
	More than RM16	0	0
Frequency of buying coffee from the favourite coffee franchise/brand	Once a month	47	22.4
	Twice a month	78	37.1
	Once a week	44	21.0
	Two to four times a week	37	17.6
	Once a day	3	1.4
	More than once a day	1	0.5

6.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine both the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. The findings indicate that all variables are positively and significantly correlated with one another at the 0.01 significance level, suggesting that the dimensions of social media marketing are associated with consumer buying behaviour.

Among the independent variables, perceived trust exhibited a moderate positive correlation with buying behaviour ($r = .597, p < .01$). This finding suggests that higher levels of consumer trust are associated with stronger buying behaviour. Interactions demonstrated a high positive correlation with buying behaviour ($r = .623, p < .01$), indicating that greater engagement and interaction between consumers and brands demonstrates a strong relationship with buying behaviour. The strongest relationship was observed between entertainment and buying behaviour ($r = .718, p < .01$), suggesting that entertaining social media content plays a particularly influential role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions.

Online communities also showed a moderate positive correlation with buying behaviour ($r = .497, p < .01$), indicating that participation in online communities contributes positively to consumers' purchasing decisions. Similarly, celebrity endorsement was positively associated with buying behaviour ($r = .428, p < .01$), although the relationship was weaker than those observed for perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, and online communities. These findings suggest that all five dimensions of social media marketing are positively related to consumer buying behaviour, albeit to varying degrees.

The correlation analysis also revealed significant relationships among the independent variables. Perceived trust was positively correlated with interactions ($r = .571, p < .01$), entertainment ($r = .591, p < .01$), online communities ($r = .567, p < .01$), and celebrity endorsement ($r = .419, p < .01$). These findings indicate that trust is closely associated with other dimensions of social media marketing, particularly consumer interactions and entertaining content. Interactions were strongly correlated with entertainment ($r = .578, p < .01$) and online communities ($r = .617, p < .01$), suggesting that active engagement between brands and consumers contributes to both entertaining user experiences and stronger community participation. The relationship between interactions and celebrity endorsement was positive but comparatively weaker ($r = .465, p < .01$).

Entertainment was moderately correlated with online communities ($r = .489, p < .01$) and celebrity endorsement ($r = .486, p < .01$). These findings indicate that entertaining content may encourage consumer participation in online communities and enhance the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Furthermore, online communities and celebrity endorsement demonstrated a high positive correlation ($r = .550, p < .01$), highlighting the complementary role of community engagement and influencer-driven marketing in shaping consumer perceptions.

Overall, the results indicate that the dimensions of social media marketing are interrelated and collectively influence consumer buying behaviour. Among the independent variables, entertainment exhibited the strongest positive relationship with buying behaviour ($r = .718, p < .01$), followed by interactions ($r = .623, p < .01$) and perceived trust ($r = .597, p < .01$). These findings suggest that consumers' purchasing behaviour is more strongly associated with engaging and entertaining social media experiences than with celebrity endorsements or online community participation. These findings suggest that marketers should prioritise the development of engaging and entertaining content, foster meaningful interactions with consumers, and strengthen consumer trust to enhance purchasing

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

No	Variables	Mean	SD	Perceived Trust	Interactions	Entertainment	Online Community	Celebrity Endorsement	Buying Behaviour
1	Perceived Trust	4.01	0.656	1					
2	Interactions	4.04	0.732	.571**	1				
3	Entertainment	4.20	0.732	.591**	.578**	1			
4	Online communities	3.59	0.881	.567**	.617**	.489**	1		
5	Celebrity Endorsement	3.63	1.037	.419**	.465**	.486**	.550**	1	
6	Buying Behaviour	4.31	0.716	.597**	.623**	.718**	.497**	.428**	1

6.3 Multiple Regression Analysis and Discussion

The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 60.702, p < .001$), suggesting that the independent variables; perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement collectively explain a significant proportion of the variance in consumer buying behaviour. Furthermore, the model produced an R^2 value of 0.598, indicating that 59.8% of the variance in buying behaviour is explained by the five dimensions of social media marketing included in this study. Among these variables, entertainment emerged as the strongest predictor of buying behaviour ($\beta = 0.464, p < .001$), highlighting its substantial influence on consumers' purchasing decisions.

The findings also reveal a significant positive relationship between perceived trust and buying behaviour among Malaysian coffee consumers. This result is consistent with previous studies, which have demonstrated that trust is a critical factor influencing purchasing decisions in online environments where consumers often face uncertainty and perceived risks. Setiawan and Achyar (2021) found that higher levels of trust increase consumers' likelihood of making purchase decisions. Similarly, Wong and Mo (2019) and Indarsin and Ali (2017) reported that secure payment systems and transparent communication enhance consumer trust and encourage purchasing behaviour. Furthermore, Irshad et al. (2020)

highlighted the importance of trust in fostering long-term customer loyalty, suggesting that social interaction and consumer empowerment contribute to greater trust in a brand. These findings suggest that businesses should prioritise transparency, security, and reliability in their online platforms to strengthen consumer trust and encourage both immediate purchases and long-term customer commitment.

The results further demonstrate that interactions positively influence the buying behaviour of Malaysian coffee consumers. Consistent with the literature, social media interactions facilitate emotional connections between consumers and brands, contributing to stronger customer relationships and enhanced brand loyalty. Wilopo and Nuralam (2025) found that personalised communication and active engagement help organisations establish meaningful relationships with consumers, which subsequently influence purchasing decisions. Social interactions also support consumers throughout the information search and evaluation stages of the decision-making process. While Wijaya et al. (2021) suggested that interactions may not directly translate into immediate sales, they nevertheless contribute to stronger brand loyalty and consumer trust. Similarly, Sharmin et al. (2021) argued that meaningful interactions fulfil both the emotional and functional needs of consumers. Therefore, organisations that provide opportunities for engagement and relationship-building are more likely to cultivate loyal customers and positively influence buying behaviour.

Among all the variables examined, entertainment was found to have the strongest influence on buying behaviour. This finding supports previous research highlighting the role of entertainment in creating positive consumer experiences, strengthening emotional connections, and encouraging consumer engagement. According to Sheth and Kim (2021), entertaining content significantly influences consumer behaviour during the information search and evaluation stages of the purchasing process. Entertainment increases consumers' enjoyment of social media platforms and encourages them to engage with brand-related content. Noguti and Waller (2020) further emphasised that entertaining content is most effective when tailored to the cultural and demographic characteristics of the target audience. The present findings suggest that entertaining content not only attracts consumer attention but also contributes to stronger brand perceptions, greater consumer engagement, and ultimately higher levels of purchasing behaviour. Consequently, marketers should prioritise the creation of enjoyable and engaging content as part of their social media marketing strategies.

The study also examined the relationship between online communities and buying behaviour. However, the findings did not support a significant relationship between these variables. Although previous studies have suggested that online communities facilitate information sharing, peer recommendations, and trust-building, these benefits may not necessarily translate directly into purchasing behaviour. Zhao and Shi (2022) found that interactive knowledge-sharing activities within online communities contribute to brand identity and consumer engagement. Nevertheless, the current findings suggest that online communities may influence other consumer outcomes more directly than purchasing behaviour.

One possible explanation is that online communities contribute more strongly to purchasing satisfaction than to actual buying behaviour. Purchasing satisfaction refers to the degree of fulfilment experienced by consumers following a purchase (Chen & Lin, 2019). Online communities often serve as platforms where consumers exchange experiences, provide recommendations, and offer social validation, all of which may enhance satisfaction with purchasing decisions (Vijayakumar & Sasikumar, 2023). Positive feedback from community members can reinforce consumers' confidence in their decisions and increase which in turn, create a strong brand loyalty. Furthermore, online communities may foster long-term loyalty by providing ongoing support, guidance, and reassurance to consumers. Future research may therefore benefit from examining purchasing satisfaction as a dependent variable when investigating the effects of online communities.

Finally, the study investigated the relationship between celebrity endorsement and buying behaviour. The findings did not support the proposed hypothesis, indicating that celebrity endorsement does not significantly influence consumers' actual purchasing behaviour in this context. Although celebrity endorsement is widely recognised as an effective marketing strategy, its influence may be more pronounced during earlier stages of the consumer decision-making process rather than at the point of purchase. Previous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. Osei-Frimpong et al. (2019) found that celebrity attributes such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and familiarity positively influence consumers' attitudes towards brands and increase their intention to purchase endorsed products. Consumers often identify with celebrities and aspire to emulate their lifestyles, making celebrity-endorsed advertisements more memorable and emotionally appealing. Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2017) reported that factors such as celebrity attractiveness, popularity, and congruence with the endorsed brand play important roles in shaping consumers' purchase intentions.

Despite online communities and celebrity endorsement were significantly correlated with buying behaviour, their effects became non-significant in the multiple regression model after controlling for the influence of perceived trust, interactions, and entertainment. This suggests that their contribution to buying behaviour may be indirect or shared with other dimensions of social media marketing. At the same time, although celebrity endorsement may be vulnerable to negative publicity, Osei-Frimpong et al. (2019) suggested that positive celebrity attributes often outweigh negative publicity when influencing consumers' intentions. The present findings imply that celebrity endorsement may have a stronger effect on purchase intention than on actual buying behaviour. Its influence may also be moderated by contextual factors, market conditions, or mediating variables such as perceived trust. Future studies should therefore consider examining purchase intention as a dependent variable to better understand the role of celebrity endorsement in the earlier stages of consumer decision-making and its potential influence on subsequent purchasing behaviour. Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta, (Sig.)
Perceived Trust	0.170, (0.006**)
Interactions	0.241, (<0.001**)
Entertainment	0.464, (<0.001**)
Online Communities	0.20, (0.75)
Celebrity Endorsement	0.008, (0.88)
R	0.773
R ²	0.598
Adjusted R ²	0.588
F Change	60.702
Significance F Change	<0.001
Durbin Watson	1.978

7. Conclusion

As the coffee franchise industry continues to expand, marketers must utilise available resources effectively to develop marketing strategies that align with consumer expectations and respond to changing market dynamics. This study examined the influence of five dimensions of social media marketing; perceived trust, interactions, entertainment, online communities, and celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behaviour among Malaysian coffee franchise consumers. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on social media marketing by demonstrating how these dimensions influence consumer purchasing behaviour within the Malaysian coffee franchise industry. Specifically, the results revealed that entertainment, interactions, and perceived trust were significant predictors of buying behaviour, whereas online communities and celebrity endorsement did not significantly predict purchasing behaviour in the regression model. Among the factors examined, entertainment emerged as the strongest predictor of buying behaviour, highlighting the importance of engaging and enjoyable content in influencing consumer decisions.

The findings suggest that coffee franchise brands should prioritise strategies that foster consumer trust, encourage meaningful interactions, and deliver entertaining content through social media platforms. These elements appear to play a critical role in strengthening consumer engagement and influencing purchasing behaviour. By developing authentic relationships with consumers and providing valuable digital experiences, coffee brands can enhance customer satisfaction, encourage repeat purchases, and strengthen their competitive position in an increasingly crowded marketplace. This study also provides practical insights for marketers seeking to optimise their social media marketing strategies. The results indicate that successful social media marketing extends beyond simply increasing brand visibility; it requires the creation of trust-based relationships and engaging experiences that resonate with consumers. Such approaches can contribute to stronger consumer loyalty and sustainable business growth.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. Future studies may consider introducing brand trust as a brand trust as a mediating or moderating variable to further examine its role in influencing the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour. Brand trust may strengthen or weaken the effects of social media marketing activities on purchasing decisions. In the context of Malaysian coffee franchises, even the most creative and popular social media campaigns may be insufficient to sustain consumer loyalty if trust in the brand has not been firmly established. Therefore, future research should explore the moderating role of brand trust to provide a deeper understanding of consumer decision-making and long-term brand loyalty within the coffee franchise industry.

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