CMC2023

27th International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communications

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Editors Marwa Tourky and Vasilis Theoharakis

Building a Successful Digital Communication Strategy: Towards Delivering a Seamless Customer Experience.

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Foreword from the Conference Co-Chairs

Dear esteemed attendees,

It is with great pleasure that we extend our warmest welcome to the 27th International Conference on Corporate and Marketing Communications, which was hosted at Cranfield School of Management. This year's conference theme, "Building a Successful Digital Communication Strategy: Towards Delivering a Seamless Customer Experience," brought together leading experts, researchers, and practitioners to explore the dynamic landscape of digital transformation and its impact on corporate communication strategies.

In the ever-evolving world of business, digital transformation has become a driving force, prompting companies to adapt their communication approaches to cater to the new market reality. The focal point of this transformation is the customer, who now seeks relevant and personalized content, accessible at any moment and on any device. As a result, customer journeys have taken the center stage, shaping corporate communication strategies to deliver unparalleled customer experiences.

With global advertising spending surpassing US$560 billion, and nearly half of the world's population being regular internet users, it is evident that online channels have become paramount in brand focus. Digital avenues such as search, social media, and connected TV are now at the forefront of ad spend, signifying the importance of embracing technology to cater to the "always-connected" customer.

Within this context, the conference aimed to address crucial questions surrounding digital communications and its role in shaping brand experiences. How can digital communication create immersive experiences for both the mind and heart? What role does cognitive information processing and hedonic experientialism play in crafting effective communication strategies? How can global and domestic businesses integrate marketing and digital communications to create a seamless consumer brand experience? These are just a few of the many thought-provoking topics explored during the conference.

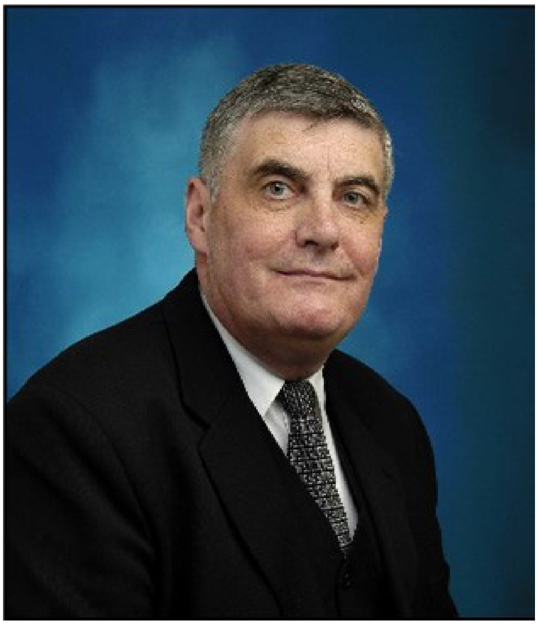
We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the presenters, attendees, and contributors who made this conference a resounding success. Your participation and dedication to exploring the nuances of digital communication and customer experience have been truly inspiring.

As we move forward, let us continue to foster collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange to navigate the exciting future of corporate and marketing communications in the digital era.

Warmest regards,

Dr. Marwa Tourky
Professor Vasilis Theoharakis
Conference Co-Chairs

Note from the Conference Founder



It is pleasing to acknowledge the contributions of the authors and presenters of the papers in these Proceedings. The papers were most interesting on this most pertinent topic. They were accompanied by excellent erudite presentations. This said, building such a strategy must also be coherently linked to the offline communication strategy. i.e. digital and offline must march hand-in-hand. Notably, they match each other in terms of resources expended. Hence, 'we' i.e the marketing communication discipline and its academic and practitioner players are often still implementing a dual strategy.

Assuming both digital and offline are in fact - seamlessly intertwined, it still may not equate to a seamless customer experience. In the rush for digital, often the AI response of 'all answers are available on our website' becomes meaningless, especially when customers face problems. Hence, the digital service back-up is probably light years away fromacceptability so far as customers and consumers are concerned. This means that the goal is evident... i.e. seamlessnesss, but the path thereto is riddled with issues, problems and potholes. Undoubtedly - as the years go by - some of these will be overcome. Hence, in this place and space are some answers, the rest awaits research and cogent argumentation.

Professor Philip J. Kitchen
Conference Founder

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Keynote speakers

Dr Demetrios Vakratsas
Associate Professor and Area Coordinator, Marketing

Dr Demetrios Vakratsas joined McGill's Faculty of Management in 2000. Prior to joining McGill, he taught and participated in research projects at The University of Texas at Dallas, London Business School, and University of Thessaloniki (Greece). His research focuses on issues of consumer response to firms' promotional and advertising strategies, strategic market entry decisions made by firms, marketing of financial services and internet marketing. His research has appeared in the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Marketing, and Applied Stochastic Models and Data Analysis. He has developed and taught courses on the subjects of Marketing Communications, Business to-Business Marketing, New Product Development, Marketing Management, and International Marketing Dr Vakratsas has provided consulting services for Nortel Networks (Dallas), Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA-London), TBWA (London), and the Executive Board of the University of Thessaloniki on advertising strategy and product design issues.

Sharon Whale
Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer

Sharon is Deputy Chief Group Executive Officer at Oliver and The Inside Ideas Group. She has been with IIG for over 6 years, originally joining as CEO of the UK Group. Sharon is an integral part of the leadership team that has delivered incredible growth and success for IIG, which has continued in 2022 and hopefully beyond. She spearheads a 'people first' culture which has led to Oliver UK being voted as one of the top places to work in the UK as well as being Campaigns Global Engagement Agency of the Year 2021. She was voted Campaign's Female Frontier CEO of the year 2021 as well as Creative Businesswoman of the Year 2021 in the Great British Businesswoman's Awards.
Prior to IIG she spent 13 years at Proximity London where she won and worked across its largest and most highly awarded accounts, including Lloyds Banking Group, VWG and particularly The Economist. The latter won over 20 awards including both the DMA Grand Prix and a Lion at Cannes.
Sharon spends her time by day being CEO and as mum in charge in evenings and weekends where all homework is now beyond her. However, she does a good line in providing lifts for her teenage daughters to netball and drama, as well as talking nonsense to the dog Pebbles and occasionally finding time to go on a date with her husband Simon, her long suffering partner in crime.

Professor Chris Hackley
Professor of Marketing

Chris Hackley was the first Chair in Marketing to be appointed at Royal Holloway University of London, in 2004. The Marketing Department he established now has more than 20 full time academic staff teaching multiple courses. Chris currently teaches MSc, MA and PhD students in advertising and marketing, and is acting Postgraduate lead. His PhD (Strathclyde) focused on advertising management and he has published widely in this and connected areas of marketing, consumer research and qualitative methods. Recent books include Rethinking Advertising as Paratextual Communication (2022) with Rungpaka Amy Hackley and published by Edward Elgar; Advertising and Promotion (2021, 5th Edition), also with Rungpaka Amy Hackley and published by Sage, and Qualitative Research in Marketing and Management (2020), published by Routledge.

About Cranfield University

As a specialist postgraduate university, Cranfield's world-class expertise, large-scale facilities and unrivalled industry partnerships are creating leaders in technology and management globally.

Our vision
To be valued globally for tackling the real-world issues of today to deliver a sustainable future.

Our mission
We work in partnership with business, academia, governments and other organisations to develop and deliver applied research and innovative education in science, technology, engineering, and management.

Cranfield's distinctive expertise is in our deep understanding of technology and management and how we work together to benefit the world.

Our education portfolio is renowned for its relevance to business and industry. We are the largest UK provider of master's-level graduates in engineering and offer a flagship MBA, extensive world-class customised executive education and professional development programmes. Our work informs government policy and leads the way in producing cutting edge new technologies and products in partnership with industry.

The research and consultancy we carry out for industry, government and business provides our students with a real-world learning environment, allowing them to develop as professionals and then transfer their knowledge to the global economy. This has always been the 'Cranfield way' but it has never been more important than in today's world.

As part of Cranfield University, Cranfield School of Management was established in 1967 and is triple accredited by the Association of MBAs (AMBA), EQUIS and AACSB.

Conference Social Activities

The Cranfield DARTeC Building Guided Tour

On day 1, delegates visited the Digital Aviation Research and Technology Centre (DARTeC) at Cranfield University which is spearheading the UK's research into digital aviation technology.

The Centre is part of three major Cranfield University themes: Transport Systems, Aerospace and Manufacturing and Materials. It aims to address research challanges facing the aviation industry. The DARTeC consortium includes Aveillant, Blue Bear Systems Research, Boeing, BOXARR, the Connected Places Catapult, Etihad Airways, Inmarsat, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Saab, the Satellite Applications Catapult, Spirent Communications and Thales, and has also received co-investment support from Research England. It was a real privilege to welcome The Princess Royal to our Cranfield campus to open our flying classroom, the Saab 340B in February 2023.

Bletchley Park

On day 2, CMC Conference delegates visited Bletchley Park. Bletchley Park is a place of exceptional historical importance. Once the top-secret home of the World War Two Codebreakers, over the past twenty five years Bletchley Park has become an internationally-renowned heritage attraction, visited by people from all over the world.

Conference delegates experienced the stories of the extraordinary men and women who worked there. Immersive films, interactive displays, exhibitions set within beautifully restored historic buildings and faithfully recreated WW2 rooms will guide visitors on a journey to discover the past.

Conference Programme

Monday 3rd April 2023

9:00 – 9:30

Registration – B111 Reception

9:30 – 9:45

Welcome Note – B111 – LR5

Marwa Tourky, Vasilis Theoharakis, Michael Bourlakis, Philip Kitchen

10:45 – 11:45

Keynote Speech – LR5

Creativity in Digital Communications

Dr Demetrios Vakratsas

Associate Professor of Marketing, Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University

11:45 – 12:00

Coffee Break – B111 Atrium

12:00 – 12:20

Session A – LR5

Session Chair: Professor Philip Kitchen

Track: Marketing Communications and Consumer Behaviour

1. Mega-influencer and celebrity brand engagement: antecedents and effect on fans' purchasing behaviours. (Anna K. Zarkada)
2. Media exposure and self-protection behavior from being scammed by call fraud. (Thitiphat Limsumlitnipa)
3. Communicating about halal products to non-muslim consumers – the role of fit and scepticism. (Samira Rahimi Mavi, Sabine Einwiller, Ingrid Wahl)
4. The Influence of Scarcity Messages On Maximizers' Alternative Search And Choice Satisfaction. (Deepa Ramanathan, Dennis T. Esch)

12:20 – 13:40

Lunch – B111 Atrium

DARTeC Tour

Conference Programme

13:45 – 14:30

Keynote Speech – LR5

Delivering a seamless customer experience in real life - how important is the role of marketing?

Sharon Whale

Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, Oliver

14:30 – 16:00

Session B – LR5

Session Chair: Professor T.C. Melewar

Track PhD Presentations

1. Co-creating sustainable buying behavior within the fashion sector: How earned media can promote a co-creation process that enhances well-being feelings among generation z consumers. (Emmanouela Kokkinopoulou, Ioanna Papasolomou, Demetris Vrontis, Lucia Porcu)
2. Exploring the impact of Green Marketing on the purchasing behavior of the consumer in the hospitality sector of Greece. (Anastasios Panopoulos, and Marios Ntinopoulos)
3. The impact of visual ewom on tourists' decision-making related to horeca destinations. (Jessy Kfoury, Ioanna Papsolomou, Svetlana Sapuric, Yioula Melanthiou)
4. The Impact Of Social Networks On Conspicuous Food Consumption - Comparison Of Generations Z, X, And Y. (Jana Pavelková, Jana Turčínková, Jakub Šácha)

16:00 – 16:15

Coffee Break – B111 Atrium

16:15 – 17:45

Session C/1 – LR5

Session Chair: Dr Tamira King

Track: Consumer Experience

1. The Impact Of Social Media Marketing On Consumers' Experience Of Food Delivery Platforms In Endemic Transition For Covid-19. (Salmi Mohd Isa, Jen Leen Loo)
2. Sustainability and engaging brand experiences on Instagram. (Sandy Bulmer, Sarah Dodds, Nitha Palakshappa)
3. Communicating customer experience technologies to financial analysts: the customer versus shareholder value conundrum. (Tina Papadopoulou, Vasilis Theoharakis)
4. Antecedents of customer engagement, positive word of mouth and brand loyalty. (Senika Dewnarain, Felix Mavondo, Haywantee Ramkissoon, Ahmed Shaalan)

Conference Programme

16:15 – 17:45

Session C/2 – LR3

Chair: Dr Annmarie Hanlon

Track: Digital Communications

1. Dimensions of tiktok's shoppertainment. (Nutthapon Jitprapai, Jantima Kheokao, Thitiphat Limsumlitnipa)
2. "Instagram Shop Made Me Buy It": The Gender Differences On Purchase Intention. (Salmi Mohd Isa, Fatin Amalina, Ahmad Sufian, Xia Jinyuan)
3. The janus faces of the metaverse. (Graham Bell, Professor Kevin Morrell, Dr Annmarie Hanlon)
4. The influence of augmented reality on brand experience, brand advocacy and purchase intentions. (Umme Kalsoom, Pantea Foroudi, T.C. Melewar, Alexis Chapman)

Tuesday 4th April 2023

9.00 – 10.00

Session D – LR5

Session Chair: Professor Stan Maklan

Track: Marketing lasting impact

1. Marketing and Marketing Communications - Developing Benificence or Discordant Babel. (Philip Kitchen)
2. Agile integrated communication – A content-based approach (Sabine Einwiller)

10:10 – 1:15

Coffee Break – B111 Atrium

10:15 – 11:15

Session E/1 – LR5

Session Chair: Dr Sharifah Alwi

Track: Corporate and Marketing Communications

1. Communicating the brand promise to internal stakeholders in higher education institutions. (Evdoxia Kyriacou, Anna Zarkada)
2. Communicating to prospective international students: the role of social media marketing communication, university corporate brand image and its effect on enrolment intention – higher education. (Sidrah Mahboob, Sharifah Alwi)
3. What is known about employee communication regarding lgbt+: a scoping review. (Ingrid Wahl, Magdalena Siegel, Sabine Einwiller)

Conference Programme

10:15 – 11:15

Session E/2 – LR3

Session Chair: Professor Sabine Einwiller

Track: Brand Communications

1. 'A huge political experiment' – exploring the political brand positioning of political parties in jersey from an internal-external perspective. (Chris Pich, J. Reardon)
2. Convincing the cyber-sceptics: how do end-consumers perceive the motives and authenticity of customer-entrepreneurs? (Maha Ebeid, Marwa Tourky, Ahmed Shaalan)
3. A brand identity crisis? Evaluating the challenges and opportunities of euro 2020. (David Cook, Christopher Pich)

11:15 – 12:15

Keynote Speech – LR5

Creative Communication and Paratextual Branding

Professor Chris Hackley
Professor of Marketing at Royal Holloway, University of London

12:15 – 13:15

Lunch and Awards – CMDC Atrium

13:30 – 17:00

Social Activity (off-campus) – Guided Tour Bletchley Park

Competitive Papers

Tracks:

Marketing Communications and Consumer Behaviour

PhD Presentations

Consumer Experience

Digital Communications

Marketing lasting impact

Corporate and Marketing Communications

Brand Communications

Track

Marketing Communications and Consumer Behaviour

Session Chair: Professor Philip Kitchen

Mega-influencer and celebrity brand engagement: antecedents and effect on fans' purchasing behaviours.

Anna K. Zarkada[a]

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Keywords: *social media influencers, brand engagement, consumer behaviour, content analysis.*

Since 2017 influencer marketing spend is reported to have grown exponentially but its growth rate is slowing down (Statista Research Department 2023) and lags behind that of traditional channels (The Business Research Company 2023) despite claims that influencer marketing is "the fastest-growing channel for brands" because "[i]nfluencers are trusted by millions of consumers" who "depend on influencer recommendations " for their purchases (Digital Marketing Institute 2021). This paper puts the hype to the test and presents an in-depth *in vivo* investigation of actual consumer engagement with a celebrity Social Media Influencer (SMIs) and her product brands.

Despite the controversy over definitions of consumer brand engagement (CBE), especially on SM platforms and through SMIs (Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon 2022), there is adequate consensus that CBE is has cognitive, emotional, experiential and social dimensions and empirically detectable behavioural manifestations (Zarkada 2021; Argyris et al. 2020; Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon 2022; Dhaoui and Webster 2021; Zheng, Li, and Na 2022). It is higher for celebrity than endorsed brands (Kennedy, Baxter, and Kulczynski 2021) and has been found to predict eWoM (Maree and van Heerden 2020) and purchase intention (Bianchi and Andrews 2018) but what is still unclear is how different SMI engagement behaviours are related to brand engagement, and actual consumer behaviour.

There seems to be a consensus the higher the sense of identification, the greater the probability of engagement (Argyris et al. 2020; Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon 2022; Jin and Phua 2014) and value cocreation behaviours (Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon 2022). SMIs' effect on behavioural intent is also a function of: (a) credibility (Sokolova and Kefi 2020; Hassan et al. 2021; Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu 2019) which is a function of trustworthiness (Giertz et al. 2022; Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu 2019), expertise or knowledge (Hassan et al. 2021), physical attraction, trustworthiness, and competence (Jin and Phua 2014) and attractiveness (Dada and Jazi 2022), (b) inspiration, enjoyability, similarity and informativeness (Ki et al. 2020), and (c) authenticity (Kennedy, Baxter, and Kulczynski 2021).

Methodology: The study departs from the norms of SMI research which either focuses on engagement analytics (e.g. Gross and Von Wangenheim 2022; Argyris et al. 2020; Lou, Tan, and Chen 2019) or adopts the 'think of a SMI' approach (e.g. Farivar and Wang 2022; Ki et al. 2020) and stops at the behavioural intent of students (e.g. Jin and Phua 2014) or panels (e.g. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu 2019).

Brand communications were conceptualised as perception episodes of which the target (Rihanna and her Fenty Beauty™ brand) and the situation (Facebook™) were kept constant.

A judgement sample of 250 potential respondents (Millennial women living in the USA who had commented on at least one of Rihanna's Posts in English) were contacted for an interview and a total of 92 useable responses were collected. Content analysis was iteratively performed during the interview (as per Neuendorf 2016) and the coded data was analysed using SPSS 29 with bootstrapping.

Data analysis and findings: The sociodemographic profile of the sample was accurately representative of Rihanna's follower statistics (HypeAuditor 2023). CBE was very high (97% regularly see the SMI's content), but only 61% Follow her. The majority (78%) had bought at least one product but the reported expenditure was low and, given the prices, the Brand was not their main one.

The SMI was perceived as pretty (Mean 4.17) but with moderate levels of expertise (3.73) credibility (3.70) and sincerity (3.54). The ANOVA tests showed that only objective ethnic similarity influences the perception of sincerity (F = 9.761, Sig = .002). Factor analysis with Alpha factoring and EQUAMAX rotation indicated that perception is a single factor construct explaining 69% of the total variance in the data (80%. for the high ethnic similarity group). The Cronbach's α was .849 .919 for the high ethnic similarity group). Both Identification and Attraction were moderately positive (Mean 3.33 and 3.55) contrary to the pundits' reports. Ethnically similar consumers were more likely to identify with the SMI and like her.

Discriminant analysis was used to explore product usage predictors. One Canonical Discriminant Function was generated (Eigenvalue .722, Wilk;s Lamda .581, Sig. <.001) and classified 93.1% of product users correctly. The best predictors of use were (i) actively seeking the SMI's content, (ii) Following the SMI, (iii) liking her and (iv) identifying with her. Ethnic similarity marginally made it in the Function (standardized canonical discriminant functions .622, 579, .530, .454, .317 respectively). SMI perception was not a predictor of product use (.196).

Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations: The study highlights the voluntariness of engagement thus confirming digital natives' reluctance to passively receive promotional messages, the existence of a strong halo effect and the importance of objective similarity. Neither of them, however, did much to turn fans to customers of value. The study contributes to understanding millennial female consumers, but a wider perceiver sample is needed for the theoretical contributions to be confirmed. Moreover, the target and situation control limit the generalisability of the results so more work is needed to compare platforms and SMIs. Nevertheless, for brands, it offers a word of caution: all that glitters does not necessarily at bring in the gold.

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Media exposure and self-protection behaviors from being scammed by call fraud.

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Keywords*: media exposure, phone scammer, call fraud, social media.*

Thailand's communications system has now completely embraced the 5G age (Meraz, 2022). We can use mobile phones, which demonstrates this. Numerous daily actions can only be facilitated by a single device. The call fraud or telephony scams are used to make the victim panic or misunderstand that they have received or lost certain benefits. Transfer money until the account is empty, or be tricked into asking for credit card information to buy products or being asked for personal information (Carrillo-Mondéjar, Martinez, & Suarez-Tangil, 2022). The majority of individuals are aware of the tricks that thieves utilize. However, there are still many people who fall into this category out of fear of wrongdoing. which crooks assert. In addition, the forging of personal information by fraudsters, such as names, ranks, and positions that are claimed as real data, is more reliable and most importantly, the process of deception. To process quickly, it will take some time. and create pressure, causing the public to panic, until they finally fall victim to these crooks. The first and most important defense is "consciousness," because the excuses used by criminals are all things that cause the victim to panic or become excited. Some claim to be officials from government agencies or financial institutions to build credibility. Sometimes there is an automated phone system to make it look like a call from a large organization. Is there any excuse or form that call center scammers like to use to deceive their victims, such as claiming that the victim is the lucky winner of the big prize (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2022).

In addition, the review of the literature related to media exposure and self-protection behavior from various dangers, including the dangers of disease (Nabity-Grover, Cheung, & Thatcher, 2020), life and property (Wei, Liu, & Liu, 2019). It will be found that news sources and the media play an important role in protecting people's lives and property (Li, Yazdanmehr, Wang, & Rao, 2019). Due to a difficulty, this is where the research on media coverage of telephone scams came from. and people all around the world should follow the self-defense techniques used by people to avoid being victims of contact center gang deceit. which, in the future, will cause significant social problems.

News reports are constantly filtered. Only pertinent, engaging news will be chosen by the audience. The opt-in procedure is described by Klapper in 1960 or receptive to learning in four steps, namely: 1) Primarily Selective Exposure 2) Selective Focus Selective retention and interpretation are the following 3) Selective perception and 4) Selective Retention and Interpretation. Communication can only be effective if the audience understands it. This understanding is the result of exposure to the message that the messenger sends through various media, which is the first process. This occurs in the selection process and is the first component of consumer perception when the consumers are exposed, there will be further awareness. According to Gilbert, et al. (2020), the general rule for choosing to be informed is that, depending on the effort factor, should be used minimally to get the most reward. Individuals are therefore more likely to choose to receive news thatUseless effort, such as news items near you that are easy to find, and beneficial to oneself.

Theories on the Uses and Gratification theory. It is a theory that emphasizes the importance of using media to meet the needs of the audience. The audience will consider what they want, from what medium, what kind of message, and that message how to meet their needs. Hidayati (2021) studied the variables of media audience needs are as follows: 1) Information needs 2) Individual identity needs 3) Information needs gatherings and social interactions; 4) entertainment needs. The concepts of popular media utilization and preference are used to describe and make predictions about the media exposure of the audience, with the belief that the audience receives it without being forced. In addition, the receiver can choose or reject the message. But they will choose to receive only the news that meets their needs. This is to support the decision to use media in order to reach the audience. As much as possible, it is necessary to conduct a study for the audience.

According to the review of documents and the related research, exposure to media results in people having more knowledge and being more up-to-date on the situation than people who are less exposed to news (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). People respond in the form of actions or thoughts (Sudham Rattanachot, 2009). And the study the cheats' methods and the communication channels of online fraud in the deception of the elderly and the experience of online fraud in the deception of the elderly who have been deceived in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand (Kornkanok et al., 2020).

H1a: The level of self-protection behavior against the call fraud when classified by the amount of exposure groups is different.

The population consisted of people who had received phone calls from scammers. The exact population size is unknown, as are the samples used in data surveys. The exact population is unknown; it is determined using calculations from the formula for infinite population (Vanitbuncha, 2018). Determine the acceptable variance at 0.05%, obtaining a sample size of 400 people, but the researcher increases the sample number to 1,000 people by multistage sampling, namely: 1) purposive sampling by selecting only people who used to talk on the phone with telephone scammers 2) Set quotas by region in Thailand. 200 people were divided into each region (Bangkok, the Northern, the Central, the Northeastern and the Southern) 3) Convenience sampling by using online questionnaires.

The questionnaire was developed based on interviews with 25 people who had been duped by call center gangs. Following that, the interview content was synthesized into questions for the questionnaire, which was divided into three sections.

- Section I. Respondent's background. 5 items; Gender, Age, Education, Income, and Occupation. The question is a checklist.
- Section II. Sources of the call fraud information. 13 items. The question is a multiple-choice which can choose more than 1 item.
- Section III. The call fraud experience is the content on the phone that 17 items. The question is a multiple-choice which can choose more than 1 item.
- Section IV. Self-protection behavior against the call fraud. 16 items. The response characteristics were on a 5-level liker scale is 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 (5 = regularly practiced, 4 = the most of the time, 3 = sometimes practiced, 2 = rarely practiced, and 1 = never practiced, respectively.

The content validity of the research tools was validated. I.O.C. = 0.8-1.00 by five academicians.The reliability of the questionnaire using the formula of the alpha coefficient method (Alpha-Coefficient) of Cronbach's Alpha with statistical significance at the level of 0.05 with a questionnaire's confidence value of 0.98

Data Analysis

- Descriptive Statistic: frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.
- Inferential Statistic: t-test for hypothesis test.

Research Finding. Demographic. One thousand people (N = 1000) who have experienced being scammed by the call fraud gangs responded to the survey. According to Table 1, the majority were female (48.9%), the age range was 28 to 32 years old (39.5%), the highest degree was higher than bachelor degree (60%), the occupation was state enterprise employees (36%), and the highest salary range was 20,001-30,000 Thai baht (53.7%).

Table 1. Profile of the participants. (N=1000).

Variables	n	%
Gender		
Male	322	32.2
Female	489	48.9
LGTBQ+	189	18.9
Age (years old)		
18-22	345	34.5
23-27	130	13.0
28-32	395	39.5
33-36	81	8.1
Higher than 37	49	4.9
Education		
Lower than a bachelor	104	10.4
Bachelor	296	29.6
Higher than bachelor	600	60.0
Occupation		
Student	96	9.6
Employee of company	80	8.0
Government Employee	120	12.0
Governor	235	23.5
State enterprise employees	360	36.0
Ownership/Freelance	109	10.9
Unemployment	0	0.0
Personal salary per month (Thai baht)		
10,000 - 19,000	100	10.0
19,001 – 20,000	112	11.2
20,001 – 30,000	537	53.7
Higher than 30,000	251	25.1

The news sources for the exposure of the call fraud information. Table 2 shows the top five of source about the call fraud are Facebook, SMS Banking Notification (100%**),** followed by Family members (85.0%), Broadcasting (58.0%), Colleague (52.6%), and Internal corporate media (50.2%) respectively. The least is Institute of Education (10.3%).

Table 2. Sources of the call fraud information.

Sources of information	n	%
1. Broadcasting	581	58.1
2. Television	495	49.5
3. Newspaper	466	46.6
4. Family members	850	85.0
5. Colleague	526	52.6
6. Internal corporate media	502	50.2
7. Governor media	428	42.8
8. Institute of Education	103	10.3
9. Facebook	1000	100.0
10. You tube	462	46.2
11. Twitter	489	48.9
12. Tiktok	447	44.7
13. SMS Banking Notification	1000	100.0
Group of exposure		
Low exposure group (1-6 sources)	331	33.1
High exposure group (7-12 sources)	669	66.9

The call fraud content. Table 3 shows that 100.0% of the respondents received content on the phone that was used to deceive them: 1) The bank account has been frozen 2) The credit card debt 3) Illegal parcel 4) Parcels sent from abroad remain at the Customs Department. 5) Parcels sent from abroad remain at the Customs Department and 6) Be the winner of a large amount of prize money. The other 12 items have a percentage less than 30%, with Have the personal secret pictures having the lowest (0.22%).

Table 3. The call fraud content.

Statement	n	%
1. The bank account has been frozen.	1000	100.0
2. The credit card debt.	1000	100.0
3. A shark loan.	295	29.5
4. Parents or close relatives are in debt.	195	19.5
5. Overdue phone bill.	196	19.6
6. Ilegal parcel.	1000	100.0
7. Parcels sent from abroad remain at the Customs Department.	1000	100.0
8. Be the winner of a large amount of prize money.	1000	100.0
9. Eligible for a tax refund.	198	19.8
10. Have the personal secret pictures.	22	0.22
11. Invite to make merit or donate.	190	19.0
12. Inviting the people to work online	293	29.3
13. The electricity or water supply was cut off.	198	19.8
14. The money was transferred to the wrong account.	199	19.9
15. Fines for violating traffic rules.	196	19.6
16. There is a case involving drugs.	196	19.6
17. Offer a quick loan service.	298	29.8

Self-protection behavior against the call fraud. Table 4 show the top five of the self-protection behavior against the call fraud are: 1) After hanging up, check the information with the impersonated agency or institution immediately (4.65) 2) Notice the phone number that has a + sign in front of it (4.59). 3) Review the possibilities of the content reported by the call fraud gang (4.54) 4) Make sure your mind is ready before you answer the phone (4.52) and 5) Get call fraud gang calls to learn all kinds of scam methods (4.51). The least score is Don't receive the phone when you see a phone number with an international code (1.71)

Hypothesis Testing. H: The level of self-protection behavior against the call fraud when classified by the amount of exposure groups is different.

Table 4 show the result of hypothesis testing between the highly exposed to the media and the low exposed to the media for self-protection behavior against the call fraud.

Table 4. Level of self-protection behavior against the call fraud.

Self-protection behavior	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t-value	p-value
1. Don't receive the phone when you see a phone number with an international code.	1.71	0.59	-0.79	0.42
2. Notice the phone number that has a + sign in front of it.	4.59	0.68	0.43	0.66
3. Make sure your mind is ready before you answer the phone.	4.52	0.71	1.46	0.14
4. Remind them that financial institutions and the government sector do not have a policy of asking for personal information by phone.	4.38	0.81	0.45	0.96
5. Review the possibilities of the content reported by the call fraud gang.	4.54	0.71	0.78	0.43
6. Don't give out any personal information, and hang up the phone as soon as possible.	4.31	0.89	0.15	0.87
7. Scold back	4.34	0..88	-1.92	0.05*
8. After hanging up, check the information with the impersonated agency or institution immediately.	4.65	0.56	-0.09	0.92
9. Immediately hang up and block the number.	4.14	097	-1.57	0.11
10. Take note of the phone number and report any clues to the relevant departments to remind the public and inform the police to prosecute.	4.13	0.98	-2.04	0.04*
11. Warn your friends and family about the story of being cheated.	4.39	0.77	-1.73	0.08
12. Install the Who Call application.	4.26	0.90	-1.37	0.17
13. Exposure to call fraud and gang news published on online media.	4.12	0.95	-0.74	0.45
14. Don't be greedy for money or rewards without knowing the source.	4.16	0.93	-1.39	0.16
15. Knowledge sharing about the call fraud can be done by posting on social media.	4.41	0.76	-0.67	0.49
16. Get call fraud gang calls to learn all kinds of scam methods.	4.51	0.66	0.25	0.79

*p<.05

People are open to news about being scammed by call center gangs from Facebook a lot, accounting for 100%. Facebook is a very popular social media site because it is easy to use and lets people connect with each other right away (Kathawut and Pornprom 2023). It is a mechanism to protect oneself from dangerous situations. Also, Safety needs are defined as a result of how Facebook page followers react to Maslow's Five Hierarchies of Human Needs (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2004).
The majority of metropolitan populations worry about safety, and residents engage with police in various ways to resolve their worries. Residents who had good experiences with the police feel safer. The corresponds to the opinions of Sachdeva and Kumaraguru (2015) which

the online social networks (OSNs) like Facebook have become popular among citizens of developing nations to express their issues and look for answers. Moreover,
A sense of emotional support encourages users to engage in self-disclosure with breadth and meaningful depth, which influences them to develop a sense of intimacy with Facebook friends. Facebook may stimulate the users' intimacy with Facebook and/or other Facebook users. Intimacy with Facebook and intimacy with Facebook friends facilitates users' loyalty intentions (Lin, & Chu, 2021).

Nowadays, online media has a greater role and influence. There is a new society emerging in the online world known as "social media" that communicates and generates social responses in many directions through the internet network, where everyone can interact with each other immediately (Kornkanok et al., 2020).

From the results of the research hypothesis test, it was found that there were two items (1. Scold back and 2. Take note of the phone number and report any clues to the relevant departments to remind the public and inform the police to prosecute.) and groups that are highly exposed to the media have different self-protection behaviors when it comes to being scammed by call center gangs. According to the review of documents and the related research, exposure to media results in people having knowledge. more up-to-date on the situation than people who are less exposed to news (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). People respond in the form of actions or thoughts (Sudham Rattanachot, 2009).

Subsequent studies should expand on the research by conducting in-depth interviews or holding focus group discussions on the issue of being scammed over the phone. to get more insights and answers.

The public knowledge variable should be used to test how self-defense behavior variables affect the relationship between the knowledge level variable and the level of self-defense behavior.

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Communicating about halal products to non-Muslim consumers – the role of fit and scepticism.

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Keywords: *halal products, company-halal fit, CSR fit, communication, CSR image scepticism.*

Globalization and migration have increased the Muslim population in many European countries and thereby the desire for products that meet religious needs. Several retailers have responded by offering halal products to thereby also foster the inclusion of their Muslim customers. In the consumer context, providing religious minorities with access to particular products and services that serve their religious needs can be seen as an act of social CSR. Although offering halal products might be part of a company's initiative to support the inclusion of Muslims, consumers are often sceptical towards CSR causes and the corporate intention behind it. Halal products are also a prominent source of confrontation between Islamic and European values. Aside from ethical concerns with regards to animal welfare, the halal controversy is accompanied by Islamophobia, which is fuelled by terrorist attacks and negative media coverage about Muslims. Thus, communicating about halal products as a CSR effort is a challenging task against this backdrop.

Research suggests that the difficulties of communicating CSR can be addressed by demonstrating a fit between the company's identity and values and the cause supported in the CSR engagement (Becker-Olsen 2010; Schmeltz 2017). High perceived fit between the company and its CSR activities has been shown to have a positive effect on consumer responses (e.g., Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) and to decrease scepticism (Rifon et al. 2004). Strong perceived fit has been shown to elicit more favourable responses (Deitz et al. 2012) such as positive attitudes and perceived sincerity (Olson 2010). The psychological explanation is that a good fit between prior expectations and knowledge about a firm and a CSR initiative facilitates the integration into a consumer's existing cognitive structure, which strengthens the connection between the company and the initiative (Becker-Olsen et al. 2006).

Despite a body of research considering effects of perceived CSR fit from a consumer perspective, the effects of company-halal fit, that is the fit between halal offerings as an act of CSR and the company on behavioural outcomes, has remained underexplored. The majority of research on halal focuses on purchasing behaviour especially among Muslim consumers. Research on non-Muslim consumers and the role of scepticism regarding the motives for offering halal products is scarce. Thus, this study addresses the following overarching research question: What is the effect of company-halal fit on consumers' cognitive and behavioural responses and how does scepticism impact this effect? The research was conducted in a European context among predominantly non-Muslim consumers, thus WOM and not purchasing behaviour was studied as the relevant behavioural response.

Based on the literature on CSR fit and consumer scepticism, we developed five hypotheses: (H1) The better consumers perceive the company-halal fit, the more favourable is their CSR image. (H2) The more favourable consumers' CSR image of a company, the greater their intention to spread positive WOM about it. (H3) The more scepticism consumers have, the less favourable is their CSR image, and (H4) the better consumers perceive the company-halal fit, the less scepticism they have. We furthermore hypothesized that (H5) the effect of perceived company-halal fit on CSR image is mediated by scepticism towards the motives of the company to offer halal products.

An online-survey was conducted to investigate the effects of perceived company-halal fit on consumers' cognitive and behavioural responses. A known retail company was used as a research object, whose name was revealed in the survey but is camouflaged here. A total of 212 participants living in Austria completed the survey.

To assess perceived company-halal fit, we applied the scale by Sengupta et al. (1997). CSR image was measured using a scale by Plewa et al. (2015) and WOM using the scale by Romani et al. (2013). Scepticism was measured with the item "COMPANY does not have a genuine concern for the welfare of their Muslim consumers" from Rifon et al. (2004). A seven-point answering format was used for all items (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The survey concluded with demographic questions regarding gender, age, and religion.

Cronbach's alpha for company-halal fit, CSR image and WOM was above .80, showing an acceptable degree of internal consistency. The hypothesized model was tested with path analysis using Maximum Likelihood estimation in SPSS AMOS 26.0.0. Moreover, to examine whether scepticism mediates the relation between company-halal fit and CSR image, specific indirect effects were tested.

As hypothesized in H1, perceived company-halal fit has a positive relation with CSR image ($\beta = .17$, $p = .008$), i.e., the better the halal offers were perceived to fit to the company, the more positive consumers regarded the CSR image of the company. Further, CSR image shows a positive effect on WOM ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$) as suggested by H2. The found negative impact of perceived company-halal fit on scepticism ($\beta = -.17$, $p = .015$) was proposed by H3, i.e., the more consumers perceive that halal offers fit to the company, the less sceptic they are about the company's intentions. Also, H4, suggesting a negative relation between scepticism and CSR image, was supported ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$).

To examine whether scepticism mediates the relation between company-halal fit and CSR image, specific indirect effects were tested using bootstrapping (2,000 samples). Results show the mediation effect suggested in H5 ($\beta = .05$, $p =.021$, lower limit = .01, upper limit = .09); i.e., perceived company-halal fit decreases consumers' scepticism and, as a consequence scepticism decreases the company's CSR image perceived by consumers.

In Western nations, which are becoming increasingly multi-cultural and where the Muslim population introduces new demands, expectations, and diverse values, this study is a step towards enhancing our understanding of halal offerings from a CSR lens. The findings highlight the importance of perceived company-halal fit. Specifically, our findings suggest that as consumers understand the alignment between the company and its halal offers better, they will have an improved perception of the company's CSR efforts in this area.

This study contributes to contemporary CSR-fit communication and halal literature on theoretical and practical levels. It addressed a gap in the literature on both CSR communication and halal by connecting the two under the umbrella of diversity and inclusion in the consumer context, thus contributing to the theoretical development of this emerging but relatively unexplored field. Second, this study contributes to the extant body of literature examining CSR-fit communication as a constitutive process that may strategically improve the positive cognitive and behavioural outcome in the context of halal product offerings. Finally, this study also contributes to practice because communicating CSR due to consumers' scepticism towards companies' motivation is challenging, and the contentious nature of halal products enhances the communication challenges.

There are, however, several limitations. Particularly, our research addressed the halal offering under the notion of CSR and external diversity and inclusion. However, it lacks to show the influence of effective company-halal fit concerning diversity and inclusion. An interesting avenue for further research is therefore to conduct experimental research exposing consumers to different CSR information to shed light on the effects of specific CSR-fit information in the context of halal offerings.

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The influence of scarcity messages on maximizers' alternative search and choice satisfaction.

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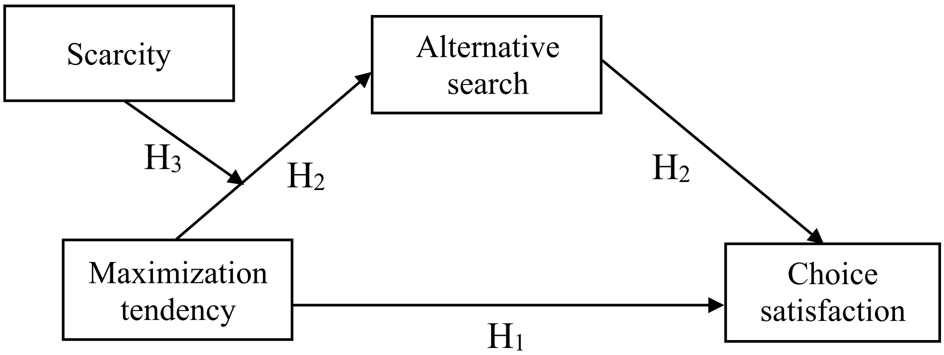
Keywords: *scarcity messages; maximizing; alternative search; decision-making; choice satisfaction.*

Being able to choose from a lot of options may feel liberating to some and burdensome to others. Whether consumers desire and/or benefit from such excessive choice depends on their approach to decision making (Cheek & Ward, 2019). Schwartz (2004) proposes two types of choice goals that decision makers have: the goal of "making the best choice" [maximizing] and the goal of "making a choice that is good enough" [satisficing]. The tendency to maximize is mostly associated with an extensive search for alternatives resulting in dissatisfaction with the chosen option (Dar-Nimrod et al., 2009; Schwartz et al., 2002). This dissatisfaction is due to factors such as retrospective regret over forgone alternatives (Kamiya et al., 2021), lower choice commitment (Sparks et al., 2012), and post-decisional dissonance (Kim & Miller, 2017). Research to date, however, has not taken into account that more often than not we come across choice situations that don't facilitate an extensive search for alternatives (Patalano et al., 2015). In order to bridge this gap, we examine whether scarcity – as a factor that decreases the opportunity for extensive search – alters maximizers' decision-making strategy and choice satisfaction.

Following the two-component maximization model (Cheek & Schwartz, 2016), we look at maximization as a goal and a strategy, and how they affect choice satisfaction. Firstly, we hypothesize (H1) that consumers' choice satisfaction decreases as their tendency to maximize [goal] increases (Cheek & Ward, 2019; Iyengar et al., 2006; Roets et al., 2012). Secondly, we postulate that alternative search [strategy] mediates the relationship between maximization and choice satisfaction (H2). Lastly, we posit that product scarcity moderates the impact of maximization on alternative search (H3). Specifically, we propose that maximizers are less likely to engage in alternative search in the face of product scarcity. We suggest this happens because maximizers' heightened need to avoid experiencing anticipated regret over the potential loss of an attractive option (Hsieh & Yalch, 2020; Patalano et al., 2015) and their desire for choice freedom (Kokkoris, 2020) increases their likelihood to succumb to scarcity messages. For an overview of all hypotheses, please refer to the conceptual model in Figure 1.

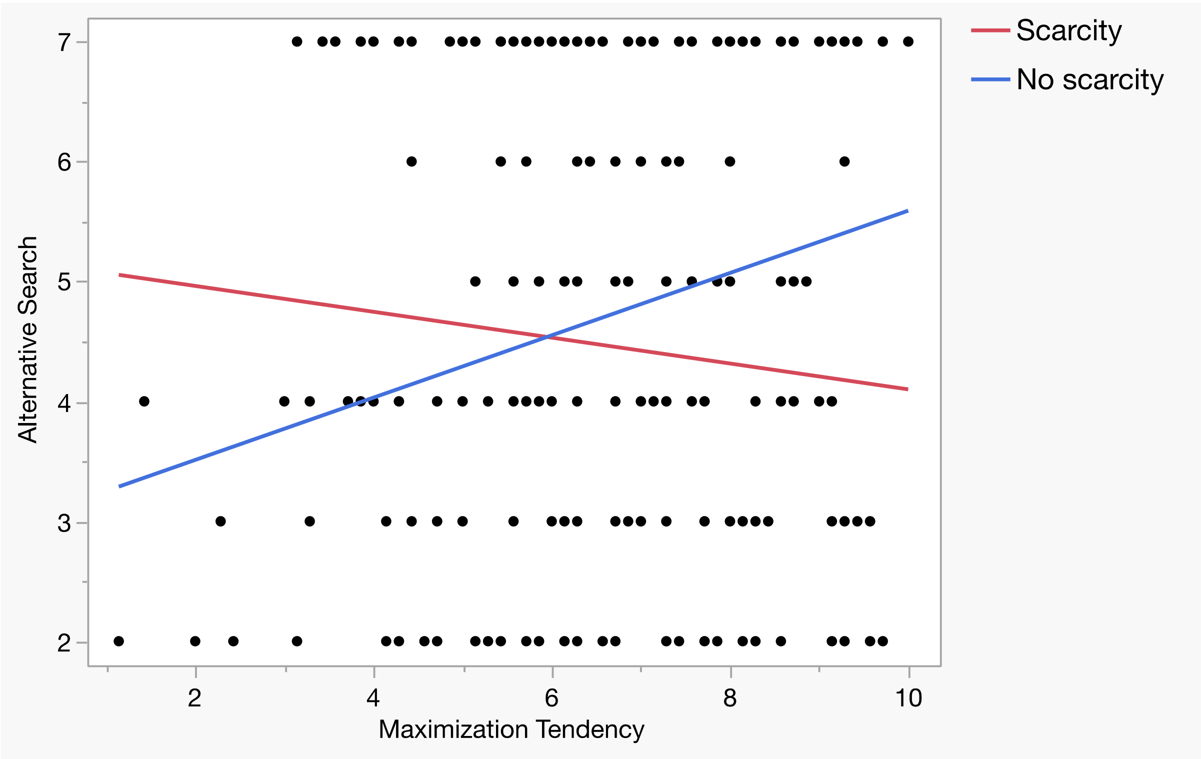
Figure 1. Conceptual model.



We conducted an experiment with a single-factorial between-subjects design in order to test our hypotheses. 205 participants (M_{Age} = 37.78, SD_{Age} = 14.88, even gender split) completed the experiment. Initially, participants were asked to answer questions designed to measure their tendency to maximize (Dalal et al., 2015). This was followed by a hotel booking scenario in which they were asked to book a hotel to celebrate an important milestone. The information participants were provided with was in line with those on popular aggregator sites such as Booking.com. Participants were equally distributed amongst two conditions (scarcity vs. no scarcity). In the no scarcity condition, participants were initially provided with two options and were free to see further options (i.e. engage in alternative search), which were introduced one at a time (up to a maximum of seven options). At any point, they were asked whether they wanted to see further options or make a choice right there, but they had to make a choice after having seen all seven possible options. The setup in the scarcity condition was identical, except that participants were led to believe that some of the hotels had low availability of rooms through limited-quantity scarcity messages. We therefore used the number of options that participants were confronted with as a measure of alternative search. Lastly, we measured participants' choice satisfaction using three questions adapted from Szrek (2017).

As hypothesized (H1), participants' maximization tendency had an impact on their choice satisfaction (b = .404, p < .001). However, this relationship was positive, i.e. those participants more likely to maximize also turned out to be more satisfied with the choice they had made. While this did go against our expectations, this positive effect of maximization on choice satisfaction reaffirms the less-popular findings of previous studies (Crossley & Highhouse, 2005; Rim et al., 2011; Weinhardt et al., 2012). The analyses did not confirm H2, i.e. alternative search did not mediate this positive relationship between maximization tendency and choice satisfaction. This might be due to the lack of choice set complexity and real-life choice consequence in the experiment. Scarcity messages moderated the relationship between respondents' maximization tendency and alternative search (b = -.367, p = .009), thereby confirming H3 (see Figure 2). A follow-up simple slopes analysis revealed that the impact of participants' tendency to maximize on alternative search was only present in the no scarcity condition (b = .259, p = .007), but not the scarcity condition (b = -.107, p = .300). This corroborates our thinking that scarcity messages force maximizers to overcome their need to engage in extensive alternative search. We conducted a floodlight analysis (Spiller et al., 2013) to establish for what range of maximization tendency the simple effect of scarcity on alternative search was statistically significant. This analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the two conditions for those people low (below 2.66 on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10) and high (above 7.53) in their tendency to maximize. That means a sizeable percentage of respondents with a high maximization tendency looked at a significantly higher number of options in the no scarcity condition, but not in the scarcity condition. This outcome is substantiated by the theory of regret regulation (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007) and the reactance theory (Mazis et al., 1973).

Figure 2. Alternative search as a function of condition and maximization tendency.



In this study, we have established a link between scarcity and maximization, an under-researched combination. We provide evidence that the mere perception of product scarcity can lead maximizers to attenuate their alternative search. We thereby challenge the postulation that maximizers always indulge in extensive search for alternatives to fulfil their goal of making the best choice (Cheek & Schwartz, 2016). From a practical standpoint, the study helps explain how scarcity promotions influence maximizers to make more spontaneous decisions (Parker et al., 2007), thus enabling marketing practitioners to develop strategies in order to convert their maximizing customers to making a choice and thereby drive sales. Future studies should examine the link between maximization, alternative search, and choice satisfaction by means of a consequential choice experiment in order to test the robustness of the observed effect. Furthermore, overall choice set complexity should not be limited so that those individuals that want to engage in truly extensive alternative search are able to do so and thereby can be identified.

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Track

PhD Presentations

Session Chair: Professor T.C. Melewar

Co-creating sustainable buying behavior within the fashion sector: How earned media can promote a co-creation process that enhances well-being feelings among generation Z consumers.

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Keywords: *generation Z, well-being, co-creation, fashion sector, earned media.*

In the fashion industry, only some studies have been made to explore the hedonic or eudemonic notion of well-being as a promoter of sustainable behavior for generation Z. Additionally, because of the mentality of Generation Z, marketing tools, such as Earned Media, are the most appropriate to convince young individuals, by engaging them in a co-creation process, to shift their behavior towards sustainable fashion purchases. The present extended abstract focuses on an extensive literature review of the specific concepts with the purpose of developing research propositions (ROs) that will guide the empirical work which will be made as a part of a Ph.D. process. Specifically, the Research Objectives of this study are:

RO1. To carry out an in-depth literature review to reveal how the hedonic and eudemonic well-being feelings arise when consumers engage in sustainable activities.

RO2. Conduct an in-depth literature review to investigate how businesses use Earned Media in the context of an IMC strategy to motivate these consumers to participate in a sustainable co-creation process within the fashion industry.

RO3: Create a preliminary conceptual framework based on the literature review findings.

RO4: To empirically test the conceptual framework by gathering empirical data from generation Z consumers in the Greek fashion industry.

RO5: Revise, verify, and finalize the framework based on the empirical evidence gathered.

The link between well-being and sustainable co-creation activities. Consumer participation and engagement in a value co-creation process can elicit hedonic and eudemonic well-being motivating factors (Tang et al, 2020; Islam et al, 2021, Zhao et al., 2019). Feelings of fun and satisfaction, the pleasure of mind, soothing, self-development, interpersonal interactions, expression of social class, and production of a positive frame of mind are some of the hedonic feelings that emerge when purchasing fashion items and lead consumers to fast fashion purchasing behavior (Wang et al, 2019). When Generation Z makes a moral purchase, they experience a feel-good emotion that motivates them to make the purchase (Bianchi et al., 2020). One recent study from Djafarova and Foots (2022), which refers to hedonic well-being motivators, suggested that the feel-good emotion was strong among participants of generation Z when asked what might make them convert their ethical intention to buy into real behavior. Feeling good by acting decent is a consensual sensation shared by participants who make ethical purchases (Djafarova and Foots, 2022). Their study investigated generation Z and whether a feeling-good emotion motivates them to make ethical purchases, but they did not focus on fashion brands. Purmono et al. (2021) investigated the impact of hedonic values on Generation Z's impulse purchasing of fashion items. Their research found that hedonic values like uniqueness, fun, recreation and peer interaction had a significant beneficial impact on the impulse buying habits of generation Z, but it had nothing to do with sustainability. *Based on the existing literature reviewed, the first gap to be explored in the present study is to what extent hedonic and eudemonic well-being motivations encourage generation Z to act sustainable when purchasing fashion items.*

The role of Earned Media. Social media and consumer education in a digital context are excellent tools for businesses to influence generation Z attitudes (Li and Hua, 2022). Consumers primarily obtain information about services or products via social knowledge, particularly controlled learning. Consumers who learn more about brands or products have a more favorable opinion of the product, helping to promote brand loyalty and confidence and, as a result, encouraging purchasing intentions by co-creating value (Zhao et al., 2019). Communication between brands and their customers is made possible by digital/social networks. Businesses can increase audience affection and commitment by distributing content and messages, resulting in increased engagement with fashion consumers (Castillo et al, 2021). In this regard, social networks and Earned Media have evolved into excellent communication channels that enable interaction, engagement, and content co-creation. According to Chatterjee et al. (2021), 88% of consumers believe that online reviews and social information influence their purchasing behavior, so every company should implement an engagement marketing strategy that includes company-customer communication and participatory systems (Rosli et al., 2018). This form of engagement model guarantees enhanced client participation in the procedure of constructing environmentally sustainable products (Tanvir et al, 2021). As a result, engagement platforms via digital/social media are required due to their ease of use and increased interactivity among users (Tanvir et al, 2021). In their research on generations Y and X about the level of participation and interaction in fashion, Papadoloulou, Papasolomou, and Thrassou (2021) discovered that the extent of consumer engagement varies depending on consumers' age group, environmental responsibility, inspiration, and other factors, and suggested that more research is necessary to investigate the different demographic consumer customer groups' views on their intention to become involved in the sustainable fashion value co-creation. Sarasvuo et al. (2022) also proposed that the field of research would profit from consistent application of the concept of co-creation. As a strong and developing economic sector, Generation Z, recognize the need to change their behavior and attitude (Dabija and Băbut, 2019). This shift is critical and provides a significant incentive for businesses (Kusa et al, 2020). *According to the literature review, the second gap that guides the current study focuses on the variables that influence Greek generation Z consumers' intention to engage in a sustainable fashion value co-creation process.*

Because of the heavy use by Generation Z of digital/ social media, companies must use appropriate integrated marketing tools to engage consumers in sustainable purchase behavior, and as the literature suggests, social/digital media may have a significant impact on Generation Z behavior due to their need to be involved when engaging online (Yadav et al, 2017). Digital media increased the interactivity of communication and the two-way communication (provided by earned media) inspires user-generated content (Anastasiei et al, 2021) and encourages e-WoM, cruising consumer engagement (Levy, 2021). In his exploratory and qualitative study, Kovacs (2021) discovered that young customers (gen Z) get most of their information from product details found on the internet, user feedback, and communication features found at the point of purchase and he suggested that further quantitative research is needed. According to Djafarova et al. (2022), future research on Generation Z is required to develop effective and smart marketing schemes that can switch Generation Z to sustainable purchases. As a result, more quantitative research is required to understand how companies can use social/digital media (Earned Media) to engage Generation Z in long-term co-creation activities. *The third research gap that guides the current study is to investigate how organizations can influence the attitudes and actions of generation Z consumers in Greece through a co-creation procedure that is favorable to environmentally friendly fashion through the use of social/digital media (Earned Media).*

Research Method. 400 members of Generation Z will receive questionnaires via email and social media. Following descriptive analysis, an inferential statistics analysis will be performed (by SPSS). Inferential statistics will be used to investigate the connection between the independent (well-being and Earned media) and dependent (intention to act sustainably and intention to engage and make sustainably sourced purchases) variables. Participants in Greece will be between the ages of 18 and 24.

Expected contribution of the study. The current study has two goals: first, to contribute to the existing marketing academic world by uncovering factors that may influence the purchasing behavior of younger generations, especially Generation Z. The study is concentrating on factors such as hedonic and eudemonic motivators that emerge from the co-creation process. The research will attempt to answer how these factors could indeed inspire Generation Z to behave more wisely towards the environment. Second, this research will be particularly beneficial to business marketing executives. It will indicate how Earned Media can raise the level of well-being by engaging Generation Z in the co-creation of environmental activities and products. The research will reveal the way in which Earned Media can influence younger generations to engage in more environmentally friendly and sustainable behavior in the fashion market.

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Green marketing and consumer behavior in the hospitality sector: An analysis using bibliometrics approaches from 2018-2022.

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Keywords*:* green marketing, green management, hospitality industry, green marketing strategies, green practices, consumer behavior, purchasing decision.

The primary objective of sustainable development is to enhance economic and social progress while maintaining the stability of the ecological and social processes that underlie local economies (Aagerup et al., 2019). Sustainable development is a goal shared by many countries and hospitality industries worldwide (Brito et al., 2010). Developing the hospitality sector in developing nations has proven to be an effective strategy for promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, generating employment opportunities, and ensuring adequate food supplies (Zekan et al., 2022). The emergence of sustainable tourism development was a response to the adverse impacts of mass tourism, which refers to the participation of large numbers of people in planned or pre-packaged trips (Dangelico et al., 2017). The hospitality industry has been associated with economic leakage and dependency and adverse impacts on the environment and society, as noted by Fauzi et al. (2019). Sustainable tourism has been advocated in various contexts to mitigate these adverse effects and promote sustainable development, as highlighted by Arbolino et al. (2021). Alternative tourism models such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, pro-poor tourism, slow tourism, green tourism, and historical tourism have been proposed to improve the standard of living for local communities and contribute to a country's sustainable development while preserving natural resources, according to Hasana et al. (2019).

Despite receiving widespread attention throughout the hospitality industry, implementing these models in the hospitality sector has often needed to be more sufficient, superficial, or limited, as Purnomo et al. (2020) noted. According to Sy et al. (2019), the hospitality industry plays a crucial part in Europe's economic and social progress by attracting millions of international tourists annually. Prior to the COVID pandemic, Strenitzerova & Achimsky (2018) estimated the worldwide value of tourism exports to be over $14 trillion. Moreover, the hospitality sector contributes over one million fresh job opportunities to the global economy each year. As noted by Sun et al. (2022), Europe is presently reopening tourism and hospitality, as these labor-intensive industries require personnel and are actively seeking new talent.

De Chermatony et al. (1999) suggest that corporate or brand image is a subjective projection that not only relies on cognitive evaluation but also on emotional context and the limitations of human thinking. The purchasing behavior of individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal use is termed consumer buyer behavior, as stated by Madhavan et al. (2015). Consumer purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by cultural, social, emotional, and psychological factors, according to Durmaz et al. (2014). Research has shown that brand image, awareness, and ownership significantly impact consumer buying behaviour. Novick et al. (2011) found that when assessing unfamiliar products or sellers, consumers are more likely to consider the brand image and environmentally-friendly products when making decisions.

Companies are more focused on building positive relationships with existing and potential customers; they sell the product with a sense of belonging to the group. They intend to determine how customers, suppliers, and nearby and distant surroundings feel about them and look at them and how they can influence this picture in mind (Wang et al. 2022). Moreover, are aware that the corporate image can have both positive and negative effects on their business goals. Furthermore, companies eagerly seek effective leadership characterized by a strong sense of ethics so that leaders may better serve their subordinates, invest in their progress, and realize the concept of a shared vision in today's dynamic business climate (Kumari et al., 2022). Green marketing and the relation of it with green policies and green innovation have been researched a lot in order to help hospitality industry on this crisis (Wu et al 2014).

Green marketing has become a topic of interest for marketers due to its potential to provide a competitive advantage. As noted by Wedzik et al. (2019), the consumer decision-making process is affected by irrationality. It is influenced by both the existing corporate image and the image created by other consumers, as highlighted by Taib et al. (2018). This study is situated within the global trend of growing green consumerism towards choosing hotels. Given the importance of green marketing in the current context, this study aims to examine its impact on consumer purchasing behavior in the hospitality sector. This study is crucial as it addresses the research gap in consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and behavior towards green marketing. Although previous studies have investigated the effect of green marketing on consumer behavior, most of them are theoretical and focus on explaining newly emerging phenomena, with relatively fewer studies using empirical and bibliometrics analyses (Skordoulis, M. et al., 2022).

However, this is the first study that has encompassed aspects of Green Marketing on the purchasing behavior of the consumer in the hospitality sector through bibliometrics. The current study precisely establishes and elucidates the research framework within this field, thereby enabling readers and scholars to develop a comprehensive and dynamic comprehension of the knowledge structure. Furthermore, this research can assist the hotel industry in comprehending how it can appeal to existing and potential customers by implementing green marketing strategies.

The next section of the paper will provide the literature review followed by the bibliometrics analysis, discussion, conclusion and implications of the study.

Literature review. This study aimed to investigate the perceived effect of green marketing on consumers' buying behavior in hospitality industry through bibliometrics analysis. This paper reviews literature focused on the constructs of green marketing and consumers' buying behavior. Search strategies included the Scopus database. Articles were discovered through critical phrases, and further articles were discovered by using Pull and Perish software by investigating relevant articles cited in pertinent material. The initial search terms were green marketing and consumers' buying behavior. The literature review conducted by the study's author has also helped to establish the relationship between the study's dependent, independent and mediating variables by analyzing the existing studies. Most of the books utilized for this study were seminal publications articulating the pioneering theorists and scholars who laid the foundation of this study's constructs. 75% of the journal articles were produced within five years of the writing of this paper.

The current era of sustainable consumption places significant emphasis on green consumerism, where environmental concerns have become a pivotal aspect of consumer decision-making (Tsourgiannis, L. et al., 2014). This shift is attributed to the heightened ecological awareness among consumers and the ongoing discourse on environmental matters. Consequently, consumers are more inclined to integrate ecological considerations into their purchasing behavior (Skouloudis, A. et al., 2022). In this context, eco-labeling plays a critical role in influencing green consumer behavior and has also been integrated into several environmental policies of the European Union (Nkansah, K., 2017). Green marketing focuses on the products or services determined to be environmentally preferable within a specific product or service category. Green marketing promotes eco-friendly behavior and sustainable consumption (Skordoulis et al., 2023). Researchers have recently focused on consumers' attitudes towards eco-labels, particularly concerning the perceived motives and barriers for choosing eco-labeled hotels over conventional ones, awareness of eco-labeling, and other behavioral aspects (Skouloudis, A. et al., 2022).

In recent decades, the tourism sector has experienced substantial worldwide economic growth, surpassing many other industries (Mercade, P. et al., 2019). Additionally, it has emerged as a significant employment provider and an essential economic pillar in several countries and regions following the recent economic recession. Despite the financial crisis, the industry has exhibited remarkable resilience, as evidenced by its ability to generate 1.34 billion dollars in 2017 and an annual increase of 7% in international tourist arrivals (Mercade, P. et al., 2019). The increase in consumers' environmental awareness and concerns has been substantial, and environmental considerations have emerged as one of the foremost factors in consumer decision-making (Skordoulis, M. et al., 2022). In the past decade, leaders in the hotel industry have exhibited a growing inclination towards implementing Green Management (GM) policies, which prioritize environmental conservation and sustainability (Suryanto, T. et al,.2019) GM is a comprehensive management process that strives to identify, anticipate, and fulfill the needs of customers and society in a financially viable and sustainable manner (DeBoer, J. et al, 2018). During its inception in the 1980s, hotels predominantly adopted GM to comply with governmental regulations and achieve cost savings by minimizing waste and energy consumption (Skordoulis, M. et al., 2022). However, in recent years, the communication of green initiatives and their influence on consumer behavior have been a salient trend, with consumers frequently associating GM with environmentally responsible business practices. The demand for "green hotels" has escalated, and GM is increasingly being linked to the quality of service, business ethics, and customer satisfaction (Jiang, W. et al, 2018).

Formulation of the proposed hypothesis. The vast majority of existing research has proved that green products are more demanding than conventional ones (Tripathi et al. 2014). Many studies have demonstrated that environmentally friendly services and products positively impact purchasing intentions and behavior of consumers (Bathmanathan et al. 2019). Some authors have also highlighted that the higher prices for green products are the most significant barrier in the buying process (Fuiyeng et al. 2015). Pruasa et al. (2019) pointed out that purchasers are unwilling to pay more for green products. Environment sensitivity positively impacts purchasing behavior of consumers (Prakash et al. 2002). Literature has therefore identified the authors with two schools of thought. The first school of thought stated that green marketing positively affects consumer behavior (Sun et al., 2022; Sy et al., 2019). The second school of thought states that green marketing is negatively related to consumer behavior due to price sensitivity (Zusawa et al. 2017). Park and Ha (2012) observed that in the case of people who have purchased green products, it is clear that they are influenced by subjective norms to a greater extent than those who have never done it. Zukin and Maguire found (2004) that social norms have a considerable impact on green consumption behavior.

The following hypothesis was proposed after conducting the literature review for further testing.

H1: Green marketing is responsible to exert the positive impact on the purchasing behavior of the consumer in the hospitality sector.

Data Analysis. The objective of this study is to perform the bibliometrics analysis on green hotels and evaluate the significance of green marketing in shaping consumer purchasing behavior in the hospitality sector. Additionally, this chapter investigates how green marketing, consumer buying behavior, and the hospitality industry interact with each other. Search strategies involved a thorough search of the articles, e-books, and journals of Scopus database. Relevant articles were identified using critical phrases, and further articles were located by exploring relevant articles cited in pertinent material. The initial search terms were "green marketing" and "consumer buying behavior." The author conducted a literature review to analyze existing studies and establish the relationship between the study's dependent, and independent variables. Most of the books used for this study were seminal publications by pioneering scholars and theorists who laid the foundation of this study's constructs. Most of the journal articles were published within the previous five years of writing this paper.

Data analysis was performed using various tools and software including VOS Viewer, and MAXQDA.

Bibliometric analysis. This section provides a brief overview of bibliometrics analysis and its objectives. After examining various review methods and comparing them with bibliometrics analysis, we determined that this approach can extract theoretical, conceptual, and practical choices made by tourists. We also explored the diverse applications of bibliometrics analysis in creative journals and academic papers and reviewed the works of other authors who have employed this method.

Bibliometrics analysis was first used in the Journal of Documentation by A. Pritchard in 1969. It is a valuable tool for analyzing quantitative results from previously published papers on the same subject (Rejeb et al., 2022). The primary goal of bibliometrics analysis is to extract insights from existing literature over a given period. It involves summarizing all the statistical analyses conducted in academic journals, according to Culnan et al. (1990). Researchers can use various options, such as scientific mapping and performance analysis, to obtain a conceptual framework that reveals the primary findings of studies in any subject.

Selection of Database. There are a number of respected indexing and abstracting databases available, some of which are multidisciplinary such as Scopus and WOS, while others are subject-specific such as JSTOR, PubMed, IEEE Explore, and ERIC. Among these databases, Scopus is particularly esteemed for bibliometrics analysis on a global scale. Bibliometrics analysis is a widely used research method across various disciplines, which relies on databases and tools to evaluate quantitative data. This research approach involves extensive use of resources, data mining, factual analysis, and calculations to identify trends in a particular area of interest. The main objective is to understand the interrelationships between different journals and summarize the current knowledge on a given research topic.

Scopus was selected because affords users with a more comprehensive and extensive range of academic information, facilitating a more expansive understanding of their research area. The platform's capacity to track and analyze citations and publications with precision empowers users to take ownership of their reputations and future prospects. Collectively, Scopus stands out as an unparalleled tool for enhancing visibility and discoverability, unmatched by any other platform (Sun et al., 2022; Sy et al., 2019). The present study has opted to use Scopus for conducting bibliometrics analysis due to its high standing as recognized by previous researchers (Sun et al., 2022; Sy et al., 2019). The researchers selected 496 articles from the Scopus database using the Pull and Perish software, exceeding the minimum requirement of 200 articles suggested by Sun et al. (2022). After filtering out 20 irrelevant articles, a total of 480 articles were retained for analysis. The bibliometrics analysis was carried out using the Vosviewer software.

The figure 1 below is demonstrating that total articles were fetched from the Scopus database using the Pull and Perish software for the year 2018-2022.

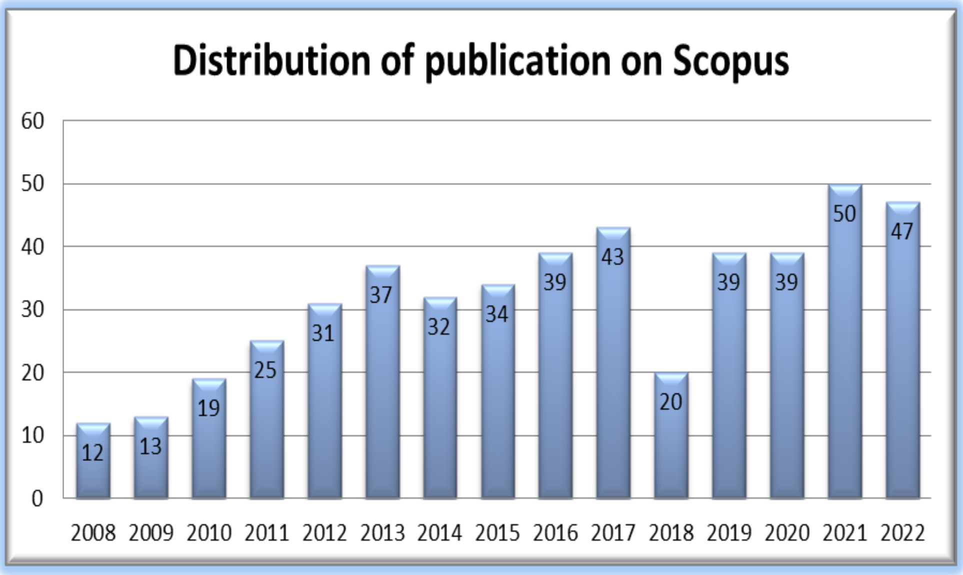
Figure 1. Articles fetch from Scopus.

Search terms	Source	Papers	Cites	Cites/year	h	g	hI,norm	hI,annual
Green Marketing [title], Green ...	Scopus	192	3080	342.22	31	52	31	3.44
Green Marketing [title], Green ...	Scopus	200	2915	583.00	26	45	26	5.20
Green marketing from 2018 to ...	Scopus	200	12518	2503.60	64	93	64	12.80

Citation metrics	Help
Publication years:	2018-2022
Citation years:	4 (2018-2022)
Papers:	200
Citations:	2495
Cites/year:	623.75
Cites/paper:	12.48
Authors/paper:	1.00
h-index:	26
g-index:	41
hI,norm:	26
hI,annual:	6.50
hA-index:	18
Papers with ACC >= 1,2,5,10,20:	191,137,73,32,17

Distribution of publications on Scopus regarding green marketing. A quantitative analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of publications in the Scopus database. Following a period of low publication rates from 2008 to 2012, there was a notable upswing in 2013, with an average increase of 50% in the number of publications compared to 2008. The upward trend continued in 2016 and 2017 with further growth in the number of publications. However, there was no improvement in 2018 compared to the previous year, with only 20 publications released. From 2019 to 2022, there was a significant increase in the relative number of publications, with an average growth compared to the previous year.

Figure 2. Distribution of publication on scopus



Network analysis. The fundamental premise of network analysis, as outlined by Borgatti et al. (2009), is to identify the relationships between key factors and visualize the resulting connections. When two nodes are linked by a line, it signifies a relationship and demonstrates a well-established social network. The primary benefit of network analysis is the ability to identify interesting research gaps from existing literature reviews.

Our current research examines numerous bibliometrics studies to utilize this tool correctly. Keyword co-occurrence, collaboration, and article and source co-citation networks are employed to generate significant results. Co-citation analysis involves identifying two articles that share the exact keywords, often resulting in similar opinions (Hjorland et al., 2013). A research paper with many co-citations is considered highly authoritative. This type of analysis allows researchers to identify critical scholars and relevant journals and map the knowledge structure of various fields. Additionally, by tracking the evolution of co-citations, we can gain insight into the dynamic progress of a knowledge domain and identify emerging fields and paradigm shifts in science (Rejeb et al., 2020). Creating a co-citation network involves connecting two nodes with an edge when a third node cites them.

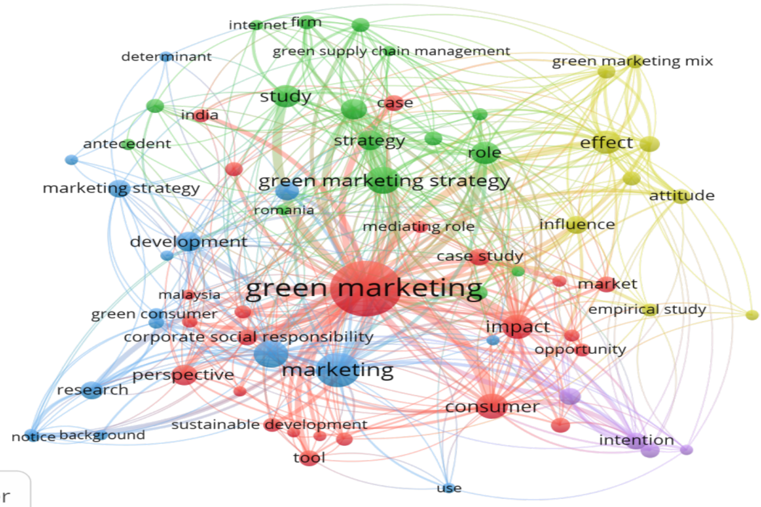
Journal co-citation analysis is when a single publication cites two different journals. This type of analysis is valuable for uncovering the intellectual foundations of a research field where journals serve as a primary vehicle for disseminating knowledge (Huang et al., 2020). By analyzing the network of journal co-citations, scholars can effectively measure the relationships and connections between journals, revealing patterns of scholarship (Chandra et al., 2019).

Academic collaboration networks can also be analyzed regarding co-authorship between authors, academic organizations, or nations (Rejeb, Treiblmaier, et al., 2021). Collaborative authorship is crucial for disseminating research, sharing knowledge, and improving research quality. Articles involving multiple authors are generally more likely to be published in reputable journals and cited more frequently than those with only one author (Glaenzel & Schubert, 2005). Ding (2011) argues that while collaboration between authors contributes to information dissemination and knowledge sharing, a collaboration between academic institutions can bring additional benefits, such as developing research partnerships across countries.

This bibliometric technique is effective for content analysis and provides a holistic understanding of the research field and future directions (Rejeb, Simske, et al., 2020). Finally, keyword co-occurrence analysis provides insights into the various research foci contributing to knowledge development in a particular research area (Abdollahi et al., 2021).

Network analysis of the Key terms. To analyze the data contained in the abstracts and titles, the Vosviewer software was utilized. A network visualization depicting the interaction among key terms is shown in the figure below. This visualization calculated the total links, link strengths, and occurrences among all key terms. The term "green marketing" had the highest frequency and was found to be linked with all other terms. The network was divided into five clusters, each identified by a different color in the figure.

Figure 3. Network analysis of Key terms in Publications.

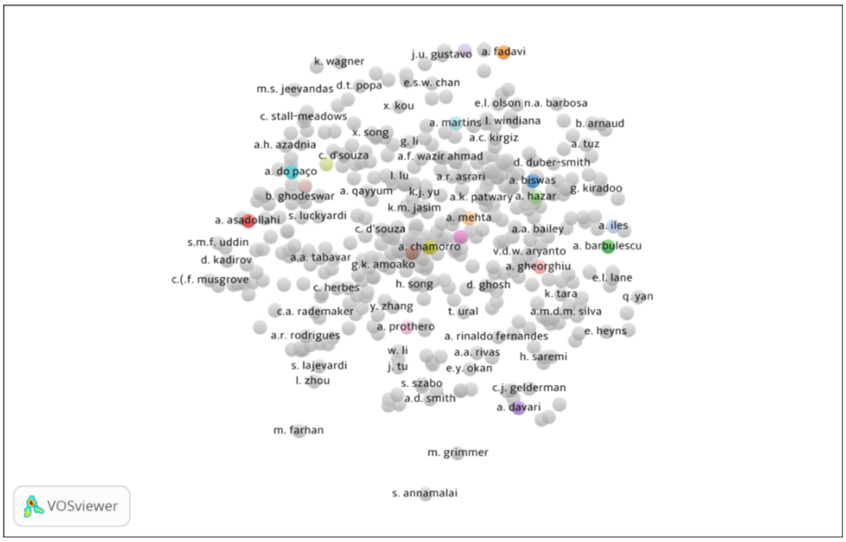


Analysis of thematic and conceptual structures. A thematic map is a strategic diagram that illustrates the development and dynamics of research clusters obtained from a keyword co-occurrence analysis. This type of map is created using density and centrality indicators and visually represents research topics and their interrelationships (Chakraborty et al., 2021). Thematic maps are widely used in bibliometric studies due to their importance and simplicity, as noted by several scholars (Rejeb et al., 2022).

Conceptual structure maps can be used to visualize the conceptual structure of a knowledge area, where a research field is divided into distinct knowledge clusters to gain new insights into the information belonging to each cluster (Wetzstein et al., 2019). This approach can help gain a deeper understanding of a research field and its underlying structure.

Authors Analysis. Bibliometric mapping was utilized to establish the relationship between the authors of the publications. The authors with a color highlight indicate the number of authors who have contributed to more than three articles on the topic under study. The results of the bibliometric mapping indicate that over 10 authors have published more than three articles on the subject of green marketing.

Figure 4. Thematic map for Authors análisis.



Keywords selection. To commence a research study, it is crucial to identify the keywords utilized throughout the paper and determine the selection process. This procedure of selecting terms as keywords for scientific papers is called keyword tagging or indexing (Lu et al., 2020). Additionally, we researched authors who selected appropriate terms for their papers based on their experience and knowledge (Shen et al., 2007). The critical factors in extracting keywords include the paper's content, the topic's background, and the authors' prior experience and knowledge (Lu et al., 2020). The most frequently used keywords from the paper abstracts were Green marketing, Green Management, Hospitality industry, Green marketing strategies, Green practices, Consumer behavior, Purchasing decision, and Corporate image.

Word Cloud for most occurred Key words in Publications. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the data, the collected keywords were coded in Maxqda. A word cloud diagram was generated using Maxqda to provide a quick overview of the data, as it is a brief evaluation form. The word cloud diagram revealed that the most frequently occurring word was "Green marketing," which aligns with the research keywords and indicates that the collected data specifically addresses the study's focus. Thus, the word cloud diagram below demonstrates that "green marketing" is the most commonly occurring keyword in the present bibliometric analysis.

Figure 5. Word Cloud for most occurred Key Words.

Journals with more publications. The table presented below provides information on the top five journals that have published the most on the topic of green marketing, based on bibliometrics analysis of the Scopus database. The journals include Sustainability, Journal of Cleaner Production, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, and International Journal of Business Research. In addition, the table also lists the most frequently cited articles on the topic of green marketing within the Scopus database.

Table 1. Journals with more publications on Green marketing on Scopus.

Journals	Number of Articles
Sustainability	**67**
Journal of Cleaner Production	**53**
Journal of Consumer Marketing	**24**
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	**30**
International Journal of Business research	**32**

Top ten cited journals. The table is providing the list for the top ten cited articles on scopus from 2008-2022.

Table 2. List of the top 10 cited articles on scopus (2008-2022).

Cites	Authors	Title	Year	Source	Findings

486	K. Lee	Opportunities for green marketing: Young consumers	2008	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	Found three predictors including environmental concern, concern for self-image, perceived environmental responsibility
390	J.J. Cronin	Green marketing strategies: An examination of stakeholders and the opportunities they present	2011	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	identifies the various stakeholders potentially impacted through the environmentally friendly efforts of a firm
245	E. Rahbar	Investigation of green marketing tools' effect on consumers' purchase behavior	2011	Business Strategy Series	Eco-brand and their perception of eco-brand show positive and significant impact on their actual purchase behavior.
243	R.M. Dangelico	"Green Marketing": An analysis of definitions, strategy steps, and tools through a systematic review of the literature	2017	Journal of Cleaner Production	Found that Green marketing important implications for managers, scholars, and students.
197	C. Groening	Green marketing consumer-level theory review: A compendium of applied theories and further research directions	2018	Journal of Cleaner Production	Found that few consumers will pay more for green products. Great disconnect between consumer green purchasing intention and actual green purchasing behavior.
175	M. Polonsky	Transformative green marketing: Impediments and opportunities	2011	Journal of Business Research	Marketers need to look for new ways of calculating and communicating value that integrates environmental value, thereby moving away from financial measures which have no real environmental meaning.
168	M. El Dief	The determinants of hotels' marketing managers' green marketing behaviour	2010	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Found that marketers' own demographics, including age, subject studies and gender, were the best predictors of

					more proactive green marketing
157	J. Cherian	Green marketing: A study of consumers' attitude towards environment friendly products	2012	Asian Social Science	Found that consumer attributes are positively related to green marketing
154	K.K. Papadas	Green marketing orientation: Conceptualization, scale development and validation	2017	Journal of Business Research	Found three dimensions, strategic, tactical and internal green marketing orientation
149	E. Ko	Green marketing' functions in building corporate image in the retail setting	2013	Journal of Business Research	Found that corporate image, product image and corporate reputation have a direct effect on purchase intentions.

Nations worked most on Green marketing. The table presented below offers information on the top five countries that have conducted the most research on the topic of green marketing, based on bibliometric analysis. According to the analysis, the United States, China, India, Malaysia, and Taiwan are among the top five nations.

Table 3. Top 5 nations worked most on Green marketing.

Countries	Number of articles
USA	113
China	105
India	93
Malaysia	47
Taiwan	39

Discussion and findings. The aim of this study was to conduct a bibliometrics analysis on green marketing and purchasing behavior of the consumers between 2018 and 2022 in the hospitality sector. To achieve this, the researchers utilized the Pull and Perish software to select 496 relevant articles from the Scopus database. Ultimately, 480 articles were included in the investigation, with data analysis conducted using Vosviewer and MAXQDA software. The analysis provided insights into the relationship between green marketing and consumer purchasing decisions. The findings revealed that "green marketing" was the most frequently occurring term, as demonstrated by the network analysis, and there has been a gradual increase in the volume of published articles, with a notable peak in 2021. This trend aligns with the global trend of increased research on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Bhardwaj et al., 2023). The keyword co-occurrence analysis highlighted the various research areas contributing to knowledge development, with "green marketing" found to be linked with all other terms. In the VOS VIEWER, author analysis revealed that over 10 authors had published more than three articles on green marketing. A word cloud diagram generated using Maxqda software highlighted "green marketing" as the most frequently occurring term, further validating the relevance of the collected data. Additionally, the bibliometrics mapping revealed that the journal Sustainability published the most on green marketing based on the Scopus database analysis as demonstrated by the previous researcher Herman et al. (2023). The most cited article on the topic of green marketing, based on bibliometric analysis, was "Opportunities for green marketing: Young consumers" by K-Lee. Moreover, the findings of the critical literature review have helped to propose a hypothesis for further testing.

Conclusions. This research study undertook a bibliometrics analysis and visualization of Scopus publications related to green marketing. Specifically, the literature review revealed that green marketing has a positive and significant impact on the purchasing behavior of Greek consumers, with the mediating role of corporate image being identified as a critical factor in this relationship. The study employed multiple analytical techniques and software, such as VOS Viewer and MAXQDA, to evaluate the collected data.

The present study explored the linkage between green marketing and the conduct of consumers toward Green hotels. A hypothesis was proposed with the help of the literature review as well. The findings of the bibliometrics analysis and critical literature review indicated a positive association between these two factors.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications. Through an examination of 460 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus, the current study has made a noteworthy theoretical contribution to the area of green marketing by identifying the principal actors and influential themes within this field. Our analysis reveals a gradual increase in scholarly attention towards this topic from 2008 to 2022, as supported by the investigation of pertinent publications. To conclude, this research has made an important theoretical contribution to the growing body of knowledge on green marketing research.

The bibliometrics results obtained from our analysis offer valuable insights for managers and practitioners, particularly with regard to the market for certified green hotels, as well as its anticipated future developments over the next five years. Such insights can aid in the strategic decision-making of companies and institutions, and ultimately, their ability to secure a significant share of the green consumer market.

Future research lines. This type of bibliometric analysis could be further analyzed and specialized to any country as a separate entity. For example, a rising trend in many countries is the proliferation of green hotels, with both established hotels implementing substantial environmental enhancements and newly constructed hotels prioritizing environmental protection. Therefore, this paper has also proposed how green marketing is responsible to exert the significant effect on the purchasing decision of consumers. The paper could also provide valuable insights into the global market for certified green hotels and its future developments in the next five years, which can help both the companies and the institutions involved in strategizing and decision-making to capture an essential share of the green consumer market. Finally, we also propose a practical pathway for green marketing applications.

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The impact of visual eWOM on tourists' decision-making related to HORECA destinations.

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Keywords: *consumer behavior, eWOM, user-generated content, HORECA, tourism, social media, Instagram, consumer-generated image, behavior intention, decision making.*

The widespread online communication platform and rapid technological advancement have shifted businesses' traditional game and marketing practices from traditional word-of-mouth to Electronic Word-of-Mouth (hereinafter eWOM). eWOM is a dynamic process of exchanging information between the former, existing, and potential customers of a product or service, an organization, or a brand. While Social networking sites (hereinafter SNSs) like Facebook, TripAdvisor, Instagram, Airbnb, and Twitter are some of the most common tools of eWOM (Guerreiro et al., 2019). In fact, SNSs are considered an integral and reliable medium for social media users to obtain information, make plans, book hotels, and select destinations (Ong & Ito, 2019).

Numerous empirical, qualitative, mixed, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and field studies have been conducted in the past to explore the factors of the eWOM that influenced the buying intentions of the customers (Sijoria et al., 2019; Sarwar et al., 2019; Gabbianelli & Pencarelli, 2020; Bhaiswar et al., 2021). As well, research on visual eWOM (photos, videos, and pictures) has recently been profitable for the tourism industry and positively influenced tourists' information searches (Mishra & Singh, 2019).

Yet, tourism consumption towards HORECA (Hotels, Restaurants and Catering) is considered one of the least researched areas in the tourism literature. It signifies a major segment in tourism that may provide a holistic understanding related to travel experiences to examine the inclusive tourists' perception of HORECA but not limited to hotels, restaurants and caterings reported (Liu et al., 2019).

Researchers found that digital technology such as eWOM and tourism websites can impact the tourists' intention and perception to visit their HORECA destinations, as reported by Molinillo et al. (2018). Therefore, visual eWOM plays a significant role in information searches related to tourism.

SNSs facilitate the production and sharing of eWOM also known as user-generated content (UGC) (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). They are a noticeable center of the online travel sector and strongly influence online scheduling, buying behavior, and shopping activity (Tran *et al.,* 2017).

The overarching aim of this study is "to explore the impact of visual eWOM and social media usage (Instagram) on the tourists' booking intentions towards tourism consumption in the HORECA Industry". Generally, the study aims to address the following research objectives:

- To review and critically analyze the existing literature: (a) regarding the impact of eWOM on the HORECA industry; and (b) the role and importance of e-WOM in the marketing discipline.
- To investigate the underpinning theories and evaluate the impact and factors related to visual eWOM that influence the tourists' intentions towards HORECA.
- To develop a preliminary conceptual framework related to the impact of visual eWOM based on the studied literature and constructed hypothesis.
- To collect data from international tourists regarding their Instagram usage and visual eWOM impact on their intentions toward tourism consumption in HORECA destinations.
- To refine the preliminary conceptual framework based on the empirical data collected and propose a final framework that portrays all the variables' relationships.

Consumers will find eWOM more valuable if the platform is simple to use, and they will be more likely to adopt data as a result (Ayeh *et al.,* 2013). In this study, the platform to be studied is Instagram, a popular SNS.

However, some research questions stipulate like:

- Do tourists consider eWOM on SNSs while planning a trip?
- How does visual eWOM influence the way consumers process a message?
- How has Instagram changed the way tourists search for info?
- What is the impact of visual eWOM (Instagram) on the tourists' booking intentions?

The studies related to eWOM have mainly focused on tourism information searches related to the HORECA industry. At the same time, there is limited research on the influence of visual (eWOM) on the information research regarding tourism intentions to visit HORECA (Bigne et al. 2019). There is a gap in analyzing the impact of visual cues on the consumers' intentions toward destinations and HORECA (Dwivedi et al. 2021).

The literature indicates that when conducting online restaurant analysis, prospective customers can look for images of food and physical evidence of restaurants created by other people. In addition, consumers seek out user-generated images, particularly on review sites, despite the value of restaurant-owned channels such as approved SNSs and internet sites (Oliveira and Casais, 2018).

The theories of Social networks, Planned Action, and the Technological Acceptance Model explain the booking intention behavior of tourists. They influenced the eWOM in the booking decision-making stages and the booking intentions (Sabapathy & Selvakumar, 2018).

There is limited study on Instagram to investigate the influence of various factors as the source of visual eWOM on the booking intentions of tourists (Mosa, 2021). Further, Stoitzner (2020) recommended analyzing the other aspects of Instagram, like videos and Instagram stories and their influence on people's decision-making.

The originality of this study is based on visual eWOM found on Instagram as a particular SNS. The latter variables' impact on bookings' will come in parallel with the recommendation of Huertas (2018) to study how travelers use videos and stories on SNSs and how much they impact travelers' purchase behaviors, and of Filieri et al. (2021) to investigate the impact of visual eWOM cues based on the destination brand image.

Methodology. This study will adopt a positivism philosophy whereby a quantitative approach will be used to collect and analyze data. The latter approach is comparable to the ones applied in other contexts that tried to forecast behavioral intention.

A self-administrated online questionnaire directly related to the topic will be distributed to gather the empirical data. Afterward, the researcher will employ several analyses by using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) thereafter confirming or disconfirming the study hypotheses. The sample will include a large number of international tourists, and they will be from different generations as recommended by di Pietro and Pantano (2013).

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The impact of social networks on conspicuous food consumption - comparison of Generations Z, X, and Y

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Keywords: *conspicuous consumption, social networks, influencers, generations*

The nature of conspicuous consumption (CC) has been constantly developing due to changing conditions in society since Veblen's time. Besides high price and luxury through which consumption conspicuously demonstrates social status, other factors have been increasingly considered indicators of wealth and success. Such factors include personality, values, self-perception, and identity (Bronner and de Hoog, 2019; Chen, Yeh, and Wang, 2008; Mai and Tambyah, 2011).

Due to development of social media, electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) has become increasingly important in purchasing behavior (Kim and Ko, 2012). These influencers or all kinds have close relationships with their followers and they are frequently influenced by their opinions and may adapt their purchasing behavior (Brown and Hayes, 2008; Freberg et al., 2011; Gundová and Cvoligová, 2019). The generations more open to such influence are mainly Generation Z, Generation Y and partly Generation X, who grew up with digital technologies and encountered them during their youth when their personality was formed (Kardes et al., 2015). Thus, the aim of this study is to explore how the nature of user behavior on social networks relates to the tendency to conspicuous consumption. Such findings can contribute not only to theory development, but also to marketing of business operation in the food industry.

Several influences affect consumers at once when they consume. In CC, the most important factor is the visibility of that consumption. It is an integral part of it and through this consumption, a consumer wants to demonstrate or enhance his or her social status (O'cass and McEwen, 2004; Heffetz. 2011).

It was Thorstein Veblen, who named and explored conspicuous consumption in his book The Theory of Leisure Class (1899). Since his time, however, the definition of CC has expanded. An important element that helped develop CC was mass media (Galbraith, 1987). Rapid economic development increased mobility, educational opportunities (Collins, 2000), and the development of new communication media which made consumption even more visible, showed the importance and need of further exploration of elements influencing CC (Patsiaouras et al., 2010).

Conspicuous consumption can be defined as “The behavioral tendency to value status and acquire and consume products that provide status to the individual.” (O'cass and McEwen, 2004, p. 10). The aforementioned visibility of consumption (Heffetz, 2011) remains the most important factor and has developed the most thanks to the progress in technologies such as social networks. These allow consumers present consumption directly at the very moment of consumption (Brooner and de Hoog, 2019).

With the rise of social media, a new form of self-made celebrities has developed – now mostly referred to as “influencers”. Most of them act as opinion leaders and consumers then adapt their purchasing behavior and choose brands that influencers recommend (De Veirman et al., 2017; Gundová and Cvoligová, 2019).

This research focuses on CC and the factors that play the largest role in this consumption. It is partly based on the works of other authors who have studied conspicuous and status consumptions in the past and adopts some of the battery of claims tested in their research studies (Chaudhuri and Majumdar, 2006; Mai and Tambyah, 2011; Riquelme et al., 2011; Assimos et al., 2019). The whole research is then adapted to the topic of CC of food and beverages.

Primary research data was collected through a questionnaire survey disseminated online between October 2022 and December 2022 in the Czech Republic (n = 679). The questionnaire consisted of several sections. One of the sections contained a battery of statements partly drawn from research focusing on conspicuous and status consumptions (Assimos et al., 2019; Chaudhuri and Majumdar, 2006; Mai and Tambyah, 2011; Riquelme et al., 2011), supplemented by statements focusing on social networks, influencers, and food characteristics. In total, there were 38 statements, with respondents expressing the level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 = strong disagreement and 7 = strong agreement with a particular statement.

The data was analyzed using Spearman's correlations, subsequently, the relationship between each factor and the variable defining CC was examined by regression analysis.

The data were analyzed using factor analysis, which combined 37 variables into 7 factors:

- Sensitivity to others – influence of the environment, experience and recommendations of others, need for approval from the environment;
- Social networks activity – inspiration, sharing consumption online, following others;
- Origin and sustainability – origin and production process, eco-friendly packaging;
- Materialism – preference for luxury, prestige brands, a public image a person has;
- Price – price sensitivity and the influence of discounts;
- Quality and brand – product quality, composition, and brand,
- Personality and grandstand – expressing personality, values, and creating an impression through consumption.

Next the regression analysis was designed to determine which of these factors were statistically significant in relation to CC. As explanatory variable was chosen variable “When I know that I will consume the food in front of others, I buy more expensive and better-quality food to be perceived better in the group.” and out of the explanatory variables from the factor analysis Sensitivity to others; Origin and sustainability; Materialism; Quality and Brand; and Personality and grandstand were identified as statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. Price ended as a statistically significant factor at the 10% level of significance. The adjusted coefficient of determination for this model was 0.56.

The paper aimed to explore how the nature of user behavior of these generations on social networks relates to conspicuous consumption. The results of the analyses show that respondents do not follow social networks and influencers much in relation to food and beverage topics. The exception is Generation Z, but even its representatives were expected to reach higher scores due to the findings of Gundová and Cvoligová, (2019) and Djafarova and Bowes (2021).

Yet, it can be said that Generation Z visits social networks daily and draws inspiration from the content provided there. From our findings it can be concluded that Generation Y consumers, if they follow an influencer, are more than 50% likely to purchase a product recommended by that influencer and for Generation X the likelihood is more than 60%.

Although a direct relationship between the nature of social network use and CC as an independent factor has not been demonstrated across generations, the use and degree if impact of social networking, at least for Generation Z, is evident in our research. Future research would benefit from an application of qualitative research which would provide deeper insights into the mindset of consumers and could shed more light on their purchase decision-making process in visible consumption.

This study offers several possible managerial implications for marketing in the food industry, such as better understanding what are the factors that consumers generally consider when making food choices. These factors should then be the focus of marketing for these companies.

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Track

Consumer Experience

Session Chair: Dr Tamira King

The impact of social media marketing on consumers' experience of food delivery platforms in endemic transition for covid-19.

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Keywords: *social media marketing, food delivery platforms, theory of planned behaviour, purchase intention, transition to endemic phase.*

Electronic commerce, often referred to as e-commerce or e-business, has been growing in terms of usage and revenue through rapid digitization of the market through factors such as increased internet adoption, advancement of instant payment gateways and increased smartphone usage (Bhat et al., 2016). Food delivery platforms are crucial for certain urban clients who view food delivery as a practical way to meet the needs of a modern and ever-changing lifestyle (Kaur et al., 2020). Because of their extensive use of technological platforms such as mobile phones and applications, young customers, for example, may be more inclined to utilise Food Delivery Platforms (Lock, 2022). Scholars assert that food delivery platforms' promotional advantages may also help explain why they are so popular (Ray et al., 2019).

Although these theories provide insight into the technological elements that promote food delivery platform adoption, they provide a limited knowledge of consumer intentions, use incentives, and gratifications that support food delivery platform use (Ray et al., 2019) This study attempts to fill these gaps by putting to the test a research paradigm based on the extended theory of planned behaviour (ETPB). An expansion of the Theory of Planned Behaviour will be used in this investigation, which includes variables such as social media marketing, attitude, subjective norm, and a moderating variable of perceived behavioural control and its effect on consumers' usage of food delivery platforms, to better understand what motivates behavioural usage of food delivery platforms during the transition to endemic stage in Malaysia.

The research adds to current information by investigating food delivery platforms in the context of Malaysia, a developing economy where food delivery platforms face significant rivalry, making it difficult for major rivals such as Grabfood, Foodpanda and ShopeeFood to generate substantial profits (Lee & Poh, 2022). With regards to significance of the study, much of the literature has emphasised the critical need of conducting empirical investigations in culturally varied nations (Yeo et al., 2017) with larger data sets (Roh & Park, 2019) because majority of current research is based on culturally similar countries and utilizing smaller samples (Suhartanto et al., 2019). It also enhances the existing knowledge database, which is useful for start-ups, policy makers, government agencies, commercial platforms, foreign investors, and marketing and advertising teams looking to improve their understanding of the consumer base in Malaysia.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development. Food Delivery Platforms (FDP). It is acknowledged that the pandemic has fundamentally changed consumer behaviour and purchasing habits, where respondents prefer online shopping due to fear of the pandemic, and a desire to feel safe at home coupled with global governmental restrictions (Jílková & Králová, 2018) while perceived severity of the pandemic and self-isolation have been found to have a significant and positive associations with consumer behaviour (Nair et al., 2022). This, together with the increased adoption of e-wallets today among all generations (Yang et al., 2021) makes food delivery platforms easy and attractive to use. Thus, with the transition to the endemic phase in Malaysia officially marking the beginning of the end, it will be interesting to understand whether consumers have a sustained propensity to order from food delivery platforms and how, and to what degree social media marketing affects that propensity.

Social Media Marketing (SMM). There are three main ways in which social media differs from traditional computer-mediated communication: The shift of activity from desktop to the web: social media allows users to access and interact with content and services from any device with an internet connection, rather than being limited to a desktop computer. There is also the shift in control of value creation from the business to the customer: with social media, users can create, share, and interact with content and services, rather than just consuming them. This gives customers more power to shape and influence the products and services they use. Finally, there is the shift in power from the company to the consumer: social media allows consumers to have a greater influence on the reputation and perceived value of a company or brand, rather than the company having complete control over its image. This shift in power gives consumers more control over their interactions with companies and brands. (Abzari et al., 2014).

Several studies have also revealed the applications of social media in real life and business settings, studying factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards social media marketing (Akar & Topçu, 2011), consumers' loyalty through social networks (Gamboa & Gonçalves, 2014), virtual reality retailing (Krasonikolakis et al., 2018), and understanding online relational norms and behaviour (Mathwick, 2002).

Theoretical Background. The main theory used for this study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), made up of three components: Attitude (beliefs about the anticipated consequences of the activity), Subjective Norm (views about others' normative expectations) and Perceived Behavioural Control (assumptions regarding the presence of circumstances that may enhance or hinder behaviour performance). (Ajzen, 1991) has posited that it is well-supported by empirical evidence which makes it a good fit for this study as the quantitative method will be employed here.

Attitude refers to a person's overall evaluation of a behaviour, whether it is positive or negative. Attitudes are often resistant to change and are developed over time, but they can be influenced by the desire to fulfil psychological needs. (Lien et al., 2014) To form an attitude about a behaviour, it is necessary to consider the potential consequences of performing the behaviour. Exogenous factors (such as characteristics, demographics, abilities, and social, cultural, and economical support) are not considered; instead, one is left to rely on their own beliefs and thoughts about how their actions will affect them individually. (N. F. Krueger et al., 2000)

Subjective Norm refers to a person's perception of whether peers, influential figures, or society generally agree or disagree with the conduct. The perception of significant persons' opinions regarding whether one should partake in an activity and the individual's incentive to do so constitute the subjectivity of norms. An individual's desire to affirm to the other's want determines their motivation to comply. (Alphonsa Jose & Sia, 2022) Because observing the behaviour of significant others is one manner of learning about appropriate behaviour, perceptions of others’ behaviour may be particularly influential in motivating behaviour (Rivis & Sheeran, 2003)

Perceived Behavioural Control relates to a person's view on how simple or hard it is to show a given behaviour or act in a certain way. According to(Murugesan & Jayavelu, 2015) perceived behavioural controls overlaps with (Bandura, 1986)’s view of perceived self-efficacy, also defined as the perceived ability to execute a target behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) (N. Krueger & Dickson, 1994) has posited that an increase in perceived behavioural control increases the perception of opportunity. Thus, a person who has no control over a situation may not be inclined to participate in it.

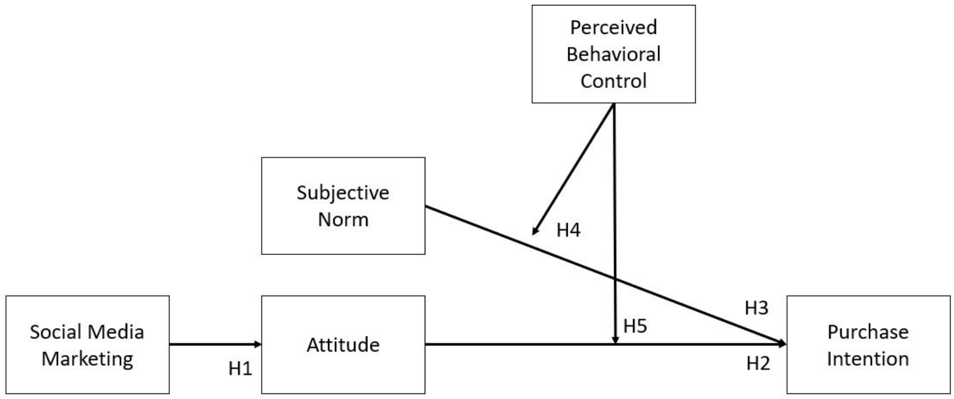
In essence, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are positively related to behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991) Behavioural intention is assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence an individual’s behaviour and indicate how much people are willing to attempt a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) Individuals with strong behavioural intentions are likely to be motivated to perform a behaviour, and to expend greater effort to achieve their goals (Norman et al., 2005). Purchase intention can be influenced by the three independent variables of attitude, subject norm, and perceived behavioural control as previously mentioned. Hence, the purchase intention will be the dependent variable in the context of this study (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is based on the idea that there is a relationship between cognition, intention, and behaviour. According to this theory, a person's intentions can predict their behaviour. According to (Brown et al., 2003), customers who express a desire to purchase a certain item will likely be found to purchase it at a higher frequency than those who do not. Prior literature has suggested that visibility has a significant positive influence on consumers' intent to use smartphone-based services, such as online food delivery companies (Pigatto et al., 2017).

The original model of TPB is employed: that is with two independent factors ultimately influencing a consumer’s purchase intention. The two independent variables are attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm, while the purchase intention will serve as the dependent variable. Besides that, the original TPB Framework has been extended to include an additional independent variable of social media marketing and its potential impact on influencing the three other independent variables, as well as adding a moderating variable of perceived behavioural control on both attitude and subjective norm.

In this study, perceived behavioural control (PBC) was chosen as a moderator because it allows investigation into how individual variations in PBC interact with other factors to predict behaviour change. It also allows the study of how different levels of control may moderate the correlations between other independent variables and behaviour. Using PBC as a moderator can further improve prediction power by offering a more nuanced understanding of the elements that drive behaviour. It also enables for the testing of the hypothesis that the link between other variables (e.g., attitudes, subjective norms) and behaviour is stronger or weaker based on an individual's perceived level of behavioural control. This approach is consistent with past literature that has used a similar framework, such as the research by (Hagger et al., 2022; la Barbera & Ajzen, 2021).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



The Effects of Social Media Marketing on the Independent Variables of TPB. Social media is defined as a set of technological advances in both hardware and software that allow for low-cost content generation, interaction, and interoperability among online users. (Berthon et al., 2012; Stephen & Galak, 2011) investigated the impact of social media (weblogs) and conventional media (television) on sales. They discovered that both social media and conventional media had a substantial impact on the company's marketing effectiveness. Through their studies, (Abzari et al., 2014) have found that social media have significant impact on brand attitude, which has a significant impact on purchase intention.

Naturally, as an individual's attitudes are affected by social media marketing, so would that of his inner and outer circle. It is posited therefore that an individual's peers would likely receive an equal amount of visibility if not influence from social media channels. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Social media marketing has a significant impact on attitude affecting purchase intention from food delivery platforms.

The Effects of Independent Variables of TPB on the purchase intention from Food Delivery Platforms. Ajzen's Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB) suggests that three independent variables - attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control - influence a person's likelihood of engaging in a particular behaviour. These variables combine to create an individual's overall tendency to act in a certain way.

An attitude toward a behaviour is a favourable or negative judgement of that activity's performance. Attitude is an evaluation of a specific activity or behaviour, such as purchasing a product, based on the attitude object, which is the thing or issue being evaluated. (Blackwell et al., 2006) It was also previously found that consumers' attitude toward a brand's social media strongly influences consumer loyalty, awareness and purchase intention (Arli, 2017).

Subjective norm refers to perceived societal pressure to engage or disengage in an action to meet expectations of his peers. If society expects a person to perform a certain behaviour, then it is more likely that the individual will do so. Inversely, if societal pressure frowns upon a certain action, then it is less likely that an individual will participate in such actions. In other words, much depends on society's view about the desirability of the action, as well as the individual's compliance and desire to fit in. In a study by (Hill et al., 1996)it was found that the effect of subjective norms may be especially crucial for innovative, challenging activities.

As a result, the purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a direct link between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Attitude has significant impact on purchase intention from food delivery platforms

Hypothesis 3: Subjective Norm has significant impact on purchase intention from food delivery platforms

The Moderating Effect of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) on the purchase intention from Food Delivery Platforms. Finally, this study investigates the moderating effects of perceived behavioural control, which is motivated by views about whether the person has the opportunity and resources required to engage in the action. In other words, the two aspects which an individual needs to assess is one's control over his own ability to perform the behaviour and one's confidence in performing the behaviour. The more control and confidence a consumer may have over his capability to purchase from food delivery platforms, the more likely one is to partake in such behaviour. Naturally, it has been established to be influential in the formation of purchase intentions (Carrington et al., 2010).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is considered:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived behavioural control moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase intention.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived behavioural control moderates the relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention.

Research Methodology. The purpose of this research is to look at the elements that influence an individual's purchase intention from food delivery platforms in Malaysia. It also intends to investigate which factors have the most influence on Malaysians' purchase intentions towards food delivery platforms. The intended contributions of this study are to give some recommendations for companies to develop marketing to increase adoption and conversion. In addition, this study intends to give more data on the moderating impact of perceived behavioural control in the TPB model, which may be useful for future studies. As a result, a quantitative strategy is adopted to collect primary data from sampled populations that may help explain the link between the indicated variables.

During the research, G-power calculator 3.1.9.4 was used to calculate the proper sample size, by considering the effect size of 0.15, alpha value of 0.05, power value of 0.8, and number of predictors of 4 for this study. Because the model comprises four variables, the minimum recommended sample size needed for this investigation is 85 respondents. The questionnaire used in this study was created using Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp and email to reach a wide range of respondents in Malaysia. Using the non-probability sampling technique, a total of 186 available data points were obtained from the population frame of consumers who have used food delivery platforms before, which is more than the minimum recommended sample size.

The questionnaire, which was designed expressly for the study topic, was the primary data gathering tool. Prior to final data collection, the questionnaire was examined for abnormalities, which were deleted for instrument purification. For demographic data, a nominal scale was utilised.

SmartPLS 3.0 was used in the investigation to identify the outer loadings of each item under seven constructs: composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), heterotrait-monotrait discriminant validity (HTMT), and overall hypothesis testing. In the next section, all the results will be reported in more detail. The influencing elements in the Extended Theory of Planned behaviour construct are well-established since they are based on past studies on how the items are formed. According to (Sarstedt et al., 2017), the outer loadings and AVE should be greater than 0.5, and the CR should be greater than 0.7. The findings are consistent with the requirements. Furthermore, bootstrapping using 5,000 subsamples and a 95% confidence interval will be used to test the hypothesis. Following the bootstrapping, blindfolding will be performed to see whether the model has predictive relevance or not. A Q-square value greater than 0 is deemed desirable.

Kock (2015) states that when the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is greater than 3.3, it could indicate that a model is influenced by common method bias, which is a type of collinearity. To ensure that the model is free of common method bias, a collinearity test should be conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). If all VIFs produced in the inner model during this test are less than or equal to 3.3, it means that the model is not contaminated by common method bias.

Additionally, Harman's single factor test to check whether threshold values are less than 50% to determine there is no common method bias. Upon inputting all the factors and investigating within SPSS, the results to identify whether a single factor accounts for the covariances among the items this study utilized was only 38.45%, less than the suggested 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, it is concluded than common method bias is not an issue in this study.

The results showed the percentage of males was 56% and percentage of females was 44%. Among the respondents, 13% were graduates of primary and secondary school, 63% were undergraduates of diploma and degree and there was 24% master's qualification and above. In terms of occupation, the percentage of self-employed was 23%, full-time employees were 24%, part-time employees were 9% and students were 35% with the demographic of unemployed / retired / homemakers making up 4%. The percentage of respondents with income less than RM2,500 was 42%, while those making between RM2,501 to RM 4000 was 6%. The percentage of respondents with income between than RM4,001 – RM6,000 was 20%, while those making between RM6,001 to RM 8,000 was 23%. Finally, the percentage of respondents with income between than RM8,001 – RM10,000 was 3%, while the percentage of demographic earning more than RM10,001 was 6%.

Finally, there seemed to be shift in consumer patterns in ordering Food Delivery Platforms from before and after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the percentage of consumers who very infrequently (1-5 times a year) ordered Food Delivery Platforms was 7%, while after the pandemic, it was 5%. Before and after the pandemic, the percentage of consumers who ordered Food Delivery Platforms somewhat infrequently (6-10 times per year) grew from 19% to 21%. Before the pandemic, the percentage of consumers who occasionally (1 time per month) ordered Food Delivery Platforms was 45%, while after the pandemic, it was 23%. Before and after the pandemic, the percentage of consumers who ordered Food Delivery Platforms somewhat frequently (2-4 times a month) grew from 18% to 31%. Before the pandemic, the percentage of consumers who very frequently (5-10 times a month) ordered Food Delivery Platforms was 11%, while after the pandemic, it was 20%.

Statistical analysis was used to assess the relationship between the connected variables based on the data received from the questionnaire. Because of the intricacy of the structural model, which necessitates the use of a moderator variable, this study used Smart PLS 4. Structural equation modelling, which includes multivariate procedures such as factor analysis and regression analysis, provides a handy and generic framework for statistical analysis. Before evaluating the data, it was checked for the presence of common method variance before evaluating the measurement and structural model. According to (Sarstedt et al., 2021), there are two processes in analysing data. The first step entails reviewing the measurement model, whereas the second step examines the structural model once the validity and reliability of the measurement model has been proven.

Measurement Model Analysis. Table 1 showed the outer loadings, CR, and AVE of the measurement model. All values are within the allowed range. As a result, the constructs demonstrated significant loadings, sufficient reliability, and convergent validity.

Table 1. Convergent Validity.

Construct	Item Code	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's a	CR	AVE	VIF
Attitude (ATT)	ATT 1	Ordering food via Food Delivery Platforms is easy	0.870				2.303
	ATT 2	Ordering food via Food Delivery Platforms is pleasant	0.790	0.767	0.862	0.676	2.116
	ATT 3	Ordering food via Food Delivery Platforms is satisfying	0.805				1.284
Purchase Intention (INT)	INT 1	I plan to use Food Delivery Platforms after pandemic	0.844				1.642
	INT 2	If possible, I will use Food Delivery Platforms after pandemic	0.868	0.807	0.886	0.721	1.836
	INT 3	I will use Food Delivery Platforms if necessary, during the endemic	0.834				1.818
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	PBC 1	I am able to use Food Delivery Platforms	0.834				1.538
	PBC 2	I have the resources and knowledge to use Food Delivery Platforms	0.902	0.812	0.887	0.724	2.265
	PBC 3	If I choose to use Food Delivery Platforms, I am able to do so easily	0.814				2.008
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM 1	With Social Media Marketing, I prefer ordering from Food Delivery Platforms	0.903				1.963
	SMM 2	With Social Media Marketing, my friends and family often order from Food Delivery Platforms	0.897	0.772	0.864	0.684	2.160
	SMM 3	With Social Media Marketing, I feel ordering from Food Delivery Platforms is easy	0.656				1.327
Subjective Norm (SN)	SN 1	My friends and family frequently use Food Delivery Platforms	0.817				1.388
	SN 2	I have often seen friends and family use Food Delivery Platforms	0.777	0.744	0.853	0.660	1.504
	SN 3	People who are important to me often use Food Delivery Platforms	0.842				1.655

To verify that the hypotheses' structure findings are reasonable, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation ratio was also given in Table 2 to test the discriminant validity of the study. According to Table 2, the HTMT is legitimate because all reported values are less than 0.90. (Gold et al., 2001)

Table 2. Discriminant validity: HTMT criteria

Construct	ATT	INT	PBC	SMM	SN
ATT					
INT	0.389				
PBC	0.316	0.652			
SMM	0.385	0.834	0.631		
SN	0.356	0.849	0.898	0.069	

Notes: ATT (Attitude), INT (Purchase Intention), PBC (Perceived Behavioral Control), SMM (Social Media Marketing), SN (Social Norm)

Structural Model Analysis. To conclude the analysis, Table 3 presents the primary hypothesis testing, which shows all hypotheses accepted due to significant connections discovered by SmartPLS 3.0. The hypotheses are related to the link between social media marketing and attitude, attitude and intention, and subjective norm and intention. The statistical significance of these hypotheses was determined by evaluating their p-values, which measure the likelihood that the observed results occurred by chance. To be considered statistically significant, the p-value must be less than 0.05. In this case, all hypotheses had p-values of 0.000, 0.039, and 0.000, respectively, indicating that they are statistically significant. These three hypotheses also have t-values of 4.637, 1.766, and 5.896, which is more than the threshold of 1.645.

Table 3. Direct Effect Hypotheses Testing.

Hypotheses	Relationships	Standard Deviation	Path coefficients	t-value	P value	5% (LL)	95% (UL)	f^2	Findings
H1	SMM -> ATT	0.069	0.322	4.637	0.000	0.200	0.420	0.116	Supported
H2	ATT -> INT	0.059	0.104	1.766	0.039	0.011	0.204	0.019	Supported
H3	SN -> INT	0.094	0.555	5.896	0.000	0.390	0.695	0.292	Supported

Notes: SMM (Social Media Marketing), ATT (Attitude), Purchase Intention (INT), SN (Subjective Norm)
A 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 5,000

Finally, to examine the moderation effects in Table 5, the moderating effects of perceived behavioural control hypotheses on the relationship between attitude and purchase intention is rejected when the p-Value is greater than 0.05, indicating that the evidence gathered is insufficient to suggest an effect exists in the population. In contrast, the hypothesis on the relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention is accepted when the p-Value is 0.010 (less than the recommended value of 0.05). However, the moderating effects of perceived behavioral control hypothesis on the relationship between Subjective Norm and purchase Intention is supported. The t-value of H4 and H5 is 2.340 and 0.479 respectively. This means that the difference between the means of the two groups represented by H4 and H5 is 2.340 standard errors for H4 and 0.479 standard errors for H5.

Table 5. Results of the structural model (moderating effect)

Hypotheses	Relationships	SE	Path coefficients	t-value	P value	5% (LL)	95% (UL)	Findings
H4	PBC x ATT -> INT	0.052	0.025	2.340	0.316	-0.062	0.106	Unsupported
H5	PBC x SN -> INT	0.059	-0.139	0.479	0.010	-0.218	-0.022	Supported

Notes: PBC (Perceived behavioural Control), ATT (Attitude), INT (Purchase Intention), SN (Subjective Norm)
Note: A 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 5,000

The variance in the endogenous variable explained by the exogenous variable was explained using R-squares. As a result, 32.2% of the change in an individual's attitude toward using food delivery platform can be explained by social media marketing; and 10.4% of the change in an individual's intention to use food delivery platforms can be explained by individual's attitude toward using food delivery platform and subjective norm. Furthermore, a Q-square value greater than 0 indicates that the model is predictively relevant.

Discussion. In recent years, social media marketing has become an increasingly important tool for businesses looking to reach and engage with their customers. One area where social media marketing has had a significant impact is in the food delivery industry.

This study is meant to explore how social media marketing affects individuals' attitudes and purchase intention on food delivery platforms. The findings above have sufficiently and empirically proven the positive and significant correlation of social media marketing on attitude and subjective norm towards purchase intention. In other words, social media marketing can directly affect an individual's attitude and purchase intention from food delivery platforms.

There is evidence to suggest that social media marketing can influence consumer attitudes towards food delivery platforms (H1). For example, the results are aligned with previous literature on study conducted by (Balakrishnan et al., 2014) which found that social media marketing strategies such as online marketing communications, including electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), online communities, and online advertising, are effective at promoting brand loyalty and increasing product purchase intention using company websites and social media platforms. Additionally, (Duffett, 2017) found that social media marketing communications had a positive impact on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes of young consumers.

It must also be shown that attitudes have a direct and positively correlated effect towards purchase intention (H2). Research has shown that consumer attitude plays a significant role in shaping purchase intention. For example, a study conducted by (Abzari et al., 2014)found that consumers with a positive attitude towards a product or brand were more likely to have a higher purchase intention compared to those with a negative attitude.

Similarly, previous literature has also shown that consumer attitudes can be influenced by various factors, such as marketing communications, personal experiences, and social influence. For example, a study by (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017) found that that user-generated positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on Facebook has a significant impact on consumer electronics brand attitude and purchase intention.

In conclusion, consumer attitude is a complex and multifaceted concept that plays a significant role in determining purchase intention. Understanding and influencing consumer attitudes can therefore be a powerful tool for businesses looking to increase sales and customer loyalty.

Subjective norm is a psychological concept that refers to the perceived social pressure to engage in a particular behaviour. It is based on the belief that individuals are influenced by the perceived expectations and opinions of their social groups and reference groups. In the context of consumer behaviour, subjective norm can play a significant role in determining purchase intention (H3). For example, a consumer who believes that their friends and family approve of a purchasing from food delivery platforms may be more likely to have a higher purchase intention compared to a consumer who perceives a negative subjective norm.

Researchers have consistently found that subjective norm is an important predictor of consumer behaviour, and it has been shown to influence a wide range of behaviours, including purchase intention. This has been shown in relation to the purchase of food products (Shin & Hancer, 2016) as well as in the context of online shopping (Noor et al., 2020). Understanding and influencing subjective norm can therefore be a valuable tool for businesses looking to increase sales and customer loyalty.

However, there is inadequate data to support this moderating impact of perceived behavioural control on attitude and subsequent purchase intention (H4). This study suggests that perceived behavioural control does not have adequate effect on an individual’s attitude such that it affects his purchase intention. If perceived behavioural control is not found to have a moderating effect over attitude, it means that the relationship between attitude and purchase intention is not influenced by the individual's perception of their ability to engage in the behaviour. In other words, the individual's attitude towards the product or brand is the primary determinant of their purchase intention, and their perceived behavioural control does not affect this relationship.

As highlighted by (Sniehotta et al., 2014) this hypothesis could be because there are limitations to the Theory of Planned behaviour. For example, it presumes that the individual has access to the resources and opportunities necessary to successfully engage in the desired action. It does not account for other elements that influence behavioural intention and motivation, such as fear, danger, mood, or experience. While it considers normative consequences, it does not examine environmental or economic factors that may influence a person's intention to engage in an activity. Despite the importance to the theory, the added idea of perceived behavioural control may not exercise meaningful influence over behaviour. This is consistent with the study's findings, which showed that one's actual attitude and conduct may not be directly tied to how much behavioural control they consider themselves to have.

It also excludes subconscious influences on behaviour (Sheeran et al., 2013) and role of emotions beyond anticipated affective outcomes (Conner et al., 2013)In particular, the problem of ‘inclined abstainers’, individuals who form an intention and subsequently fail to act, has been a recognised limitation of the Theory of Planned behaviour that remains unaddressed by the theory (Orbell & Sheeran, 1998) which could be one of the reasons for this result. There are also concerns about its validity. Unlike Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) it assumes that behaviour is the result of a linear decision-making process and does not consider that it can change over time.

Even though the Theory of Planned Behaviour is sufficient and frequently used to forecast people's intentions, it is nevertheless subject to many critiques owing to the insufficient number of factors to describe the true causes of intention development. As a result, the extended form of Theory of Planned Behaviour was chosen and used here since the addition of more factors may generate a great explanatory power in predicting people's intentions.

That being said, it must be noted that for this study, the moderating effect of perceived behavioural control on subjective norm and subsequently purchase intention (H5) has sufficient significance to be proven. It means that the relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention is influenced by the individual's perception of their ability to engage in the behaviour. In other words, the individual's subjective norm towards the product or brand is more likely to influence their purchase intention if they feel that they have the necessary skills, resources, and confidence to engage in the behaviour.(Hagger et al., 2022)

According to (Hagger et al., 2022) few studies have examined the extent to which PBC influences the relationship between attitude and intention, or between subjective norm and intention. A few studies have found that PBC moderates the relationship between attitude and intention (Earle et al., 2019; Hukkelberg et al., 2014) , as well as between subjective norm and intention (Barbera & Ajzen, 2020; Yzer & van den Putte, 2014), and in health behaviour contexts.

However, not all studies have found significant effects (Earle et al., 2019; Umeh & Patel, 2004), and some research has even suggested that PBC has a negative effect on the relationship between subjective norm and intention, meaning that individuals may be less likely to be influenced by subjective norms when they feel they have high levels of control.

It is important to note that the findings on the moderating role of PBC on the attitude-intention and subjective norm-intention relations are mixed and more research is needed to fully understand the impact of PBC on these relationships.

In conclusion, an extended version of TPB was used to examine 186 data points to understand the factors influencing an individual’s purchase intention towards food delivery platforms, as well as the moderating effects of perceived behavioural control on attitude and subjective norm. It is found that attitude and subjective norm have a significant effect on an individual’s purchase intention, while perceived behavioural control only moderates the subjective norm, but not an individual’s attitude. Therefore, to increase adoption towards food delivery platforms, companies should increase their presence of social media marketing. (Filo et al., 2015) A broad network of an individual’s circle utilising food delivery platforms, as well as the impact of social media marketing on individual attitudes is the key to unlocking increased consumer purchase behaviour in Malaysia (Arli, 2017).

The impact of social media marketing on consumers’ usage of food delivery platforms during the transition to endemic stage in Malaysia has significant practical implications for food delivery platforms and marketers in Malaysia. By understanding the effect of social media marketing on consumers’ usage of food delivery platforms during this transition, companies can better target their marketing efforts and develop strategies that are more effective in attracting and retaining customers. Additionally, this study can inform food delivery platforms and marketers about the factors that drive consumer behaviour in Malaysia and how these may differ from other regions. Overall, the practical implications of this study are significant and can help food delivery platforms and marketers effectively reach and engage with consumers in Malaysia.

In terms of theoretical implications, by examining the role of social media marketing in shaping consumers’ usage of food delivery platforms during the transition to endemic stage in Malaysia, researchers can gain insight into how consumers evaluate and choose products and services in the face of changing market conditions and societal factors. This study can also inform theories of how consumers adapt to and cope with sudden changes in their environment, and how marketing strategies may need to be adjusted in response to these changes. Overall, this study has the potential to contribute to the development of robust and nuanced theories of marketing and consumer behaviour in the digital age.

A study is always subject to certain limitations, which may impact the validity and reliability of the results. It is important for researchers to acknowledge and address these limitations to provide a clear and accurate interpretation of the findings. By acknowledging the limitations, researchers can also identify potential avenues for future research and suggest ways to overcome these limitations in future studies. In this context, the limitations that were encountered during the research process are discussed.

Firstly, this study was wholly based in Malaysia and may not be generalizable or fully applicable in different countries. Due to limitations of time and sample size from convenience sampling, only 186 Malaysian respondents could be reached. The sample size also seems to be homogenous as race, ethnicity and location were not part of the questionnaire. As a result, it seems to be a constrained demographic. Future undertakings may attempt to explore deeper the nuances between race, ethnicity, and state of residence with a larger dataset, as there may be significant differences to be explored between urban and rural respondents. Furthermore, the population sampling was done through convenience sampling, which may yield different results in other researchers' hands.

Secondly, this study only used the quantitative approach, it is suggested that a qualitative or even mixed method approach may be of interest to future researchers. While numerical survey data is helpful in predicting likelihood of outcomes, it may lack context behind the rationale of the outcomes. Thus, utilizing a mixed method approach is to provide an additional dimension and richness to the datasets collected, by understanding the connection driving a consumer's behaviour towards food delivery platforms and enhance the findings.

Finally, this study only focuses on food delivery platforms and did not extend to other food service or food-adjacent industries e.g., Online grocery platforms, online mart platforms, online pharmaceutical platforms, etc. Aside from that, there are opportunities to further explore the perspective of relevant stakeholders apart from food delivery platforms consumers, for example: delivery riders, F&B merchants, and food delivery platforms employees.

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Sustainability and engaging brand experiences on Instagram.

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Addressing grand challenges such as sustainability requires a focused effort across individual, organisational, and societal levels. Organisations and their brands are increasingly responsible for delivering more than profit – societal and environmental impact to promote sustainability are a given. An emphasis on sustainability for people and planet alongside profit further drives organisational intent to ensure consumer' purchase decisions align with brands and causes. In doing so, brands must reach the hearts and minds of their consumers if they are to have positive impact.

Responsible marketing and consumption are integral to sustainability, thus ensuring the sustainability intent of brands is communicated through effective messaging is vital. Pervasive social media, especially used in the promotion of clothing and footwear brands on Instagram, have the potential to be a positive force for good. The challenge for brands is to keep consumers engaged in visual digital platforms by producing relevant, interesting, shareable content that is true to the brand and positively contributes to their sustainability agenda. While consumers need to be ready to act – marketers need to understand how best to create engagement with their brands to promote sustainable consumption (Fuchs and Boll 2018).

Understanding how brands use digital platforms to influence engagement has become critical in marketing (Dhaoui and Webster 2021; Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie 2014). Extant research has focused on the impact of content and engagement due to influencers (Silva et al. 2020), selfies and user generated content (Mayrhofer et al. 2020), and to a lesser extent brand generated content (Djafarova and Bowes 2021), particularly on Instagram. However, recent marketing literature on social media highlights the need for more understanding of the effectiveness of digital branded content and for more research into the "cognitive, affective, behavioural and social dimensions of consumer engagement" in this sphere (Bowden and Mirzaei 2021, 1411). Considering the importance of the global sustainability challenges and the extant research on marketing communication an important question endures – how can sustainability messaging by a brand can create positive change in consumer attitudes and behaviours leading to a more sustainable future? We respond to calls for work that explores marketing communications that build, manage, and sustain brand experience, with an emphasis on sustainability messaging in official brand posts on Instagram. Our research question addresses how Instagram is used by brands with a sustainability agenda to create experiences for the mind and heart. We develop a typology of brand approaches to sustainability communication.

An interpretive qualitative case study approach was implemented to explore how Instagram is used by three leisure clothing and footwear brands with a sustainability agenda to create engaging consumer experiences. We developed detailed case descriptions for Patagonia, Lululemon and Allbirds using multiple sources to understand the brands' sustainability mission and values. The brand selection criteria included 1) established fashion apparel/footwear brand with retail outlets 2) sustainability at the heart of the brand/has transparent sustainable marketing practices, 3) selected brands include a variety of environmental, social, wellbeing sustainability issues 4) active Instagram accounts; post content regularly 5) selected brands include a mix of global and local retailers. Data collection involved documenting all official Instagram account posts by the focal brands (1 July - 31 December 2021), logging every post with details of date, description of imagery and text; 343 individual posts were analysed. Content analysis of posts used a multimodal approach, inductively creating categories, and deductively applying existing theory. Cross case analysis generated deep insights into how sustainable brands communicate sustainability messages that engender experiences for the heart and mind on their official Instagram accounts. We now offer brief insights into the cases.

Patagonia claims that 'We're in business to save our home planet'. They rarely use their Instagram account for product/retail promotions, and do not utilise shoppable posts or social media influencers. Patagonia utilises high quality images to elicit emotional responses emphasising the beauty of the planet linked to solo sporting pursuits, engendering a sense of connection, challenge, and exhilaration. Patagonia uses lengthy narrative texts alongside video and still imagery. More than 50% of posts highlight people taking action and doing good at a micro/local level to counter specific environmental, social, Indigenous, cultural or community issues. They use Instagram as a platform to promote sustainability and engage consumers' minds with key issues, creating meaningful associations for the brand (Fernández, Hartmann, and Apaolaza 2022). They adopt strong (sometimes controversial) positions and actively encourage consumer engagement with issues to create positive change. Patagonia creates authentic and inspirational content that directly advocates for environmental and social causes, promotes activism, and offers engaging Instagram experiences for their target audience.

In contrast to the sometimes-strident approach of Patagonia, Lululemon posts connect with consumers on multiple levels of heart and mind and are designed to arouse feel-good experiences that promote social sustainability. Lululemon has the betterment of the community, environment, and economy as its founding principle. Their Impact Agenda emphasises improving the well-being of their internal and external community. Their vision is to advance equity in physical, mental, and social well-being, and create environments that are equitable and inclusive for its ambassadors, employees, and supply-chain workers. Their posts showcase organised events and inspirational people/practices interspersed with promotion of specific products. Lululemon's posts have consistent positive sentiment, with uplifting and motivating stories relating to mindfulness and physical activity, including yoga and other sports. Their diverse posts reveal a gentle attempt to create a place online where consumers can experience connection and being part of something bigger than themselves. Instagram posts are used to proactively support human well-being through community connection, a key facet of social sustainability (Minton et al. 2022).

Allbirds offers an alternative approach to brand communication in support of consumer engagement with sustainability. Allbirds is 'on a mission to prove that comfort, good design, and sustainability don't have to be mutually exclusive… the environment is a stakeholder. We believe we can be a global leader that inspires others to do good' (Allbirds 2021). Aside from the company's commitment to protecting the environment, it is distinguished by a sense of humour that is juxtaposed with the more serious content of their messages. Allbirds evidence their eco-credentials in fun, light-hearted and visually attractive ways. Most posts have an explicit product/sales focus, many with backstories relating to their environmental initiatives. However, it is their use of humour and strong visual brand identity in combination with testimony about their own plans and actions that offers a consistent flow of entertaining content and valuable experiences for Allbirds' Instagram account followers.

Our study identifies how brands with a sustainability agenda offer Instagram content that creates experiences by engaging customers' hearts and minds, encouraging them to linger and interact with the brand, each other and with sustainability initiatives. Personal experiences of brands on Instagram are facilitated by a variety of engaging visuals and narratives when consumer interests are well aligned with brand messaging. We develop a typology of brand approaches to sustainability communication that engender consumer experiences for the heart and mind and offer suggestions for future research in this area. Our study highlights the importance of messaging to create valuable feel-good experiences that encourage thinking, lead to consumer conversations, and stimulate action. Our study shows that diverse and holistic sustainability messaging on Instagram can be used to promote caring for people, planet, and prosperity.

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Communicating customer experience technologies to financial analysts: The customer versus shareholder value conundrum.

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Customer experience is a fundamental marketing concept that, over the past decades, has been receiving significant attention by scholars and practitioners alike (Becker and Jaakkola 2020). The emergence of new technologies is causing a shift in how customers interact with businesses (Ameen et al. 2021; Hoyer et al. 2020; Flavián, Ibáñez-Sánchez, and Orús 2019). Consequently, in order to build, manage, and sustain customer experience effectively, businesses are called to embrace these new technologies and make relevant investments. In line with this, the worldwide spending on customer experience technologies in 2022 was estimated to be 641 billion U.S. dollars (IDC 2019). While customers certainly drive these investments and are the ultimate judges of their success, the present study focuses on a different stakeholder group that has a vested interest in them and has been largely overlooked by the literature on customer experience, namely sell-side financial analysts (henceforth analysts).

Analysts are information intermediaries, relying on various sources of information/inputs such as SEC filings, industry reports, earnings conference calls (ECCs), and other management communications, to produce certain outputs such as earnings forecasts, target price forecasts, stock recommendations, and conceptual reports, and subsequently assist investors and other financial-market stakeholders in their decisions (Ramnath, Rock, and Shane 2008). Given the financial market's dependence on their opinion, analysts constantly scrutinize companies' moves based on the shareholder-value principle. Specifically, Shin and You (2017) explain that the shareholder value principle is based on the idea that public companies' ultimate goal is supposed to be the maximization of shareholder value. Furthermore, they argue that financial-market stakeholders (analysts included) base their judgements on this principle. From this perspective, analysts continuously evaluate companies' moves to ensure that they maximize net present value (NPV), and therefore conform to the shareholder-value principle. Furthermore, the body of work at the marketing-finance interface suggests that financial-market stakeholders such as analysts hold such significant power over companies, that their feedback might even force them to alter their marketing spending (Edeling, Srinivasan, and Hanssens 2021). As such, companies are motivated to persuade analysts that their investments in customer experience technologies have the potential to maximise NPV, and consequently shareholder value.

While scarce, marketing research acknowledges the importance of communicating effectively with financial-market stakeholders such as analysts (Dolphin 2003). Yet, research on customer experience, in particular, has not examined how companies can persuade analysts about the value of their investments in customer experience technologies in order to secure their continued support and avoid getting forced to alter their spending to the detriment of customer experience. As such, the present study aims to identify what constitutes effective communication when companies attempt to persuade analysts about the value of their investments in customer experience technologies.

To achieve the above-mentioned aim, this study adopts a single case study design, focusing on Facebook and its interactions with analysts during ECCs. In particular, we have chosen Facebook as it is a company with known investments in customer experience technologies and has analysts' continuous attention. At the same time, ECCs are a form of quarterly disclosure, wherein company executives present their current and future strategies and directly converse with financial-market stakeholders, that seem to be among the most relied-on sources of information (Jancenelle, Storrud-Barnes, and Javalgi 2017; Matsumoto, Pronk, and Roelofsen 2011; Palmieri, Rocci, and Kudrautsava 2015; Price et al. 2012). As such, we have chosen ECCs as a useful platform to examine companies' communication efforts about their investments in customer experience technologies, as company executives are highly likely to engage in conversations about them and, at the same time, financial-market stakeholders are more likely to pay greater attention to their efforts. More specifically, we focus on the discussion (Q&A) part, where analysts had the opportunity to ask Facebook executives questions about their investments in customer experience technologies and receive immediate answers, as this part of ECCs is considered to be o higher informational value (Jancenelle, Storrud-Barnes, and Javalgi 2017; Matsumoto, Pronk, and Roelofsen 2011; Palmieri, Rocci, and Kudrautsava 2015; Price et al. 2012).

Our work in progress employs framing analysis (see Goffman 1974) to analyse our corpus of Q&A interactions between Facebook executives and analysts on Facebook's investments in customer experience technologies. Our preliminary findings reveal that, when communicating their investments in customer experience technologies, Facebook executives primarily rely on two frames, namely end-customer value and business-partner value. These findings are in line with Facebook's business model, which relies on both end users and business partners (i.e., advertisers and developers). Furthermore, our examination of the corresponding analyst reports, where analyst reactions are classified into positive, negative and neutral, shows that analysts react positively to communication efforts employing the business-partner value frame or a combination of the end-customer and business-partner value frames, and negatively to communication efforts solely relying on the end-customer value frame. These findings suggest that, given Facebook's business model, analysts are persuaded about their investments' value only when executives' communication efforts include a strong message about their potential to generate revenues for the business and therefore create shareholder value.

Our study contributes to marketing scholarship by bringing further attention to a stakeholder whose importance has been acknowledged by the body of work at the marketing-finance interface, but has been largely overlooked by the literature on customer experience. Our findings contribute to both theory and practice by enhancing our understanding of what constitutes effective communication when companies attempt to persuade analysts about the value of their investments in customer experience technologies. Future research can further examine the generalizability and applicability of these findings by working with a larger corpus and in different contexts.

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Rethinking customer engagement through social customer relationship management.

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Keywords: *social customer relationship management, customer engagement, positive word of mouth, brand loyalty, hierarchical regression.*

This paper explores the roles of social customer relationship management (SCRM) and customer engagement as potential strategies to mitigate the crisis leading to profitability. Given the mayhem triggered by the COVID 19 pandemic, the onus is on hoteliers to retain their service employees and to preserve service assurance at the same time. Findings from a study by Santini et al. (2020) underscores that the value associated with the purchase of hospitality services involves three times more hedonic value than utilitarian value. However, due to reduced disposable incomes it is likely that a number of clients will choose to shift to other service providers (for e.g. from five star to four star) which can create new opportunities for certain business entities but disaster for others. Many service providers will have to go through a trajectory change which will entail the introduction of new value propositions where the focus will be on the creation of more customised, unique, sustainable and memorable experiences (Zheng et al., 2022; Reed and Baird, 2019). Previous studies have rarely looked at the impact of social customer relationship management on customer engagement, PWOM and brand loyalty from three different perspectives. The aim of this study is thus to identify the best predictors of customer engagement, PWOM and brand loyalty from these three perspectives.

The main objective of traditional CRM has been to maximise customer lifetime value (CLV) which represents the expected total net profit resulting from the relationship with the customer (Babin and Harris, 2018; Simoni et al., 2022). However, with an increase in social media channels, the CLV index fails to capture a customer's value contribution to the business. CLV is profit-oriented and solely gauges the future financial benefit that the business entity may derive from its clients. But the following is no more applicable in the digital era as social customers are empowered and they also have increasing access to competing firms' products and services. Hence, they can add value to the firm in a plethora of ways which include non-monetary benefits. In harmony with the previous, Malthouse et al. (2013; Adamış and Pınarbaşı, 2022) proposed that the strategic objective of SCRM should comprise of various forms of value which includes CLV, customer referral value, customer influence effect, customer influence value and value to the consumer. The very focus of SCRM is on the collaboration between firms and customers to create mutual benefits for both parties. Lariviere et al. (2013) refers to this joint focus as value fusion. Viewed from another angle some customers may perceive the process of value fusion as being intrusive and a breach of their privacy. To overcome this downside, researchers advocate future researchers to develop and propose more specific measures of antecedents to describe customers' value contribution to companies (Lee et al., 2021, Zheng et al., 2022). It is crucial to analyse how social media communication strategy should be designed with inputs from various stakeholders; one cannot create value without involving the house residents who are the employees (Kumar, 2020). This emphasises the need for a multi-stakeholder approach.

This study is also supported by Bonoma's strategic fit quadrant (1984). According to Bonoma, (1984), even if robust strategies are formulated by the marketing team strategy failures may result from poor implementation. Poorly executed strategies can lead a major upheaval from an organisational perspective (Touni et al., 2022). Implementation strategies must be scrutinised and justified in the boardroom and this could lead to the deletion of certain business units particularly given the unprecedented situation we are living in. In these uncertain situations, hoteliers have to engage with their customers and remind them about their contributions in the form of co-creation which is a form of user led innovation. Customer engagement has both economic and social benefits (Dewnarain et al., 2019a; Lee et al., 2021) and managers cannot afford to overlook the multifaceted nature of social networking sites in achievingg their CRM objectives. Establishing emotional connections through social bonding and listening are key values to be fostered by hospitality service providers. Using enhanced customisation which is one of the key benefits of a SCRM strategy can also minimise brand switching. From a theoretical perspective, this paper contributes to behavioural engagement theory which sustains behavioural intentions in the form of PWOM and brand loyalty.

The survey was opened to all three-star, four star and five-star hotels in Mauritius. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data from 211 managers, 233 employees and 373 customers. The survey questionnaire for senior managers consisted of 5 key sections (customer relationship management practices of hotels, information management process of hotels, uses of social media channels, the potential benefits such as customer experience management, crowdsourcing, electronic word of mouth and sales performance, which can be reaped by hotels through visitor engagement and organisational culture readiness to achieve communication goals). Survey questionnaire for employees consisted of a few sections in order to elicit employees' perspectives on customer relationship management practices at the organisational level and draw information on organisational culture readiness to achieve communication goals. The willingness of employees to use social media for customer service and management support was explored. The scales for managers and employees' surveys were adopted from Jamali et al., 2013; Payne and Frow, 2005; Sowamber et al., 2017; Lehmkuhl, 2014; Holt et al., 2007; Ramkissoon and Mavondo, 2016).

As for customers, the survey questionnaire consisted of 3 key sections. The purpose of the first section was to generate customer insights on organisational culture readiness to achieve its communication goals. Section 2 looked at customers' motivation to go for social media engagement and the last section explored how customers engaged with different touchpoints on social media platforms when conducting a purchase. Well-established scales were adopted from literature (Jamali et al., 2013; Khan, 2017; Abubakar and Mavondo, 2014; So et al., 2016). All the items were tested reliability and had a Cronbach alpha value at least a 0.7 (Nunally, 1978). Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to identify whether customer factors or employee factors or senior manager's factors were the best predictors for customer outcomes.

The findings indicate brand loyalty is very significantly influenced by customer factors and rarely influenced by management and employee factors. PWOM is also very significantly influenced by customer factors and rarely influenced by management and employee factors. While customer engagement is rarely influenced by employee and customer factors. Management factors explain around 53.8% of the variance in customer engagement.

This study departs from previous studies that have rarely looked at the impact of social customer relationship management (SCRM) on customer engagement, positive word of mouth (PWOM) and brand loyalty from three different perspectives (senior managers, employees, and customers).

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Track

Digital Communications

Session Chair: Dr Annmarie Hanlon

Dimensions of Tiktok's Shoppertainment.

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Keywords: *Tiktok, Shoppertainment, EFA, CFA.*

How can the world of e-commerce be shaken when the world's fastest-growing short video app. TikTok announces it as "shoppertainment"? it will be the future of global trade in the Asia-Pacific market. Until they generate about 1 trillion dollars' worth of brands by the year 2025, especially in Thailand. A market that combines shopping with entertainment. In 2022, it has a 54% chance of growing from the current $3.4 billion and could grow to $12.4 billion in three years, at a growth rate of 63% per year. This beautiful number comes from research on "Shoppertainment: APAC's Trillion-Dollar Opportunity," the first collaboration between TikTok and research firm BCG (Boston Consulting Group). Shoppertainment or the trend of shopping while watching content that entertains shoppers. This is a trend that TikTok has been trying to highlight for many years: Shoppertainment. It's a real treat for brands looking to discover new customer bases. Of course, the results of this round of surveys are not just for brands. But it's also useful for TikTok in at least two ways (Marketingopps, 2022).

In addition, over time, there have been various changes in consumer purchasing habits. particularly the shopping habits. All consumer groups now heavily rely on online shopping for their purchases. According to statistics, global e-commerce spending will surpass $4.921 trillion in 2021. And Thailand's e-commerce market is still expanding in the same way. The growth rate is steadily rising, with a total market value of more than 4 trillion baht and new companies still joining the industry. The new players are small businesses, or SMEs. This group of SMEs is considered a business unit that has the power to drive the country's economy forever. The ratio of the GDP of SMEs to the GDP of the country is almost 40%, which is very important to the economy (MGonline, 2022)

The subtle elements TikTok Shop delivers include original, interesting content. TikTok Shop is an e-commerce platform that creates new sales channels in a new format for both brand stores and small companies. TikTok Shop is a trusted entertainment platform powered by our community combined with commerce. Through a number of TikTok features, the store is able to fully generate content or stream live. The data presented above lends support to this study. The opportunity to grow has given TikTok a "new compass" to serve as a basis for pointing out the path that brand owners should take and invest in with general adolescents (ForbesThailand, 2022).

Finally, shoppertainment is not new. In the past, many e-commerce providers have already used video and audio entertainment to engage shoppers. especially the group of market service providers or e-marketplaces such as Shopee, Lazada, and JD Central that are using live streaming, games, and other technologies to enhance the shopping experience. But in TikTok's vision, shoppertainment is found. There are still some things that e-commerce can't offer. Therefore, it is the source of the objective of the research to study the elements of Tiktok's shoppertainment that will bring academic benefits. And for the benefit of business operators, they can apply for the creation of shops on the Tiktok Platform.

Research Question

- How many elements does Tiktok Shoppertainment have?
- What are the components of Tiktok's shoppertainment?

Research Objective

- To study the elements of Tiktok's shoppertainment.
- To study the indicator of Tiktok's shoppertainment.

With the increasing efficiency of the Internet, increase the speed of communication. As a result, internet users account for at least 69.5% of Thailand's total population. The global average for an average internet worker is 59.5%, according to a survey by We Are Social through the Digital 2021 Global Overview Report. In addition, Thai people spend up to 8.44 hours a day on the internet, which is ranked among the top 10 in the world. The day lasts 6.54 hours. (Marketeer, 2021).

TikTok is much more and has a different purpose than the platform itself or other social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, or Snapchat, as these are platforms primarily focused on "content creators" (Topten, 2020). The reasons for using the Internet are varied. One of them is entertainment use, whether it is exposure to news, watching movies, listening to music, etc. Nowadays, consumers have increasingly turned their attention to watching content in the form of short video clips. Because it is a platform that can receive news, it is fast and concise. It is suitable for the way of life where everything comes quickly through an intermediary called social media (Positioning, 2022). One well-known Chinese app is called TikTok. The making of brief video snippets is the highlight. It provides a wide choice of content and a channel to establish a well-liked media area, with a maximum length of 60 seconds. Moreover, the Chinese social networking service TikTok launched in China in 2016 under the name Douyin, which translates as vibrating sound, and was given the moniker TikTok due of its translation. In 2018, it was later made available internationally in English, and by 2019, it had amassed 80 million users just in the United States (Indigital, 2021).

Nine crucial aspects are listed by content marketing experts as things to take into account when developing a content marketing strategy (Baltes, 2015).

1. Prioritize quality over quantity.

2. Relevant topics that your prospects and consumers would find interesting.

targeting interest

3. Don't disregard SEO; when developing and promoting content marketing, SEO should be taken into account by using keywords.

4. Keep in mind variety: textual content like blog posts, ebooks, and white papers as well as different types of media (photos, videos, infographics, checklists, audio content,

webinars, and even live events). Additionally, diversity might apply to the type of information you produce.

5. Lay a social foundation: People share and re-share content they've found or that someone else (in most cases) shared with them on social media platforms. Content is the fuel that keeps this "engine" running.

6. Encourage your staff to share—crucial it's for the company's personnel to spread content marketing.

7. Align your efforts in content marketing and advertising.

8. Use metrics to track internet comments.

9. Talk to those who share and provide comments.

The current study used a community intercept sampling technique to enlist research participants in order to include purchasers who have made purchases on Tiktok (Brenner, 1996). The survey study included 1500 participants in total. Participants in the study are people from the North, Central, East, Northeast, and South who have used Tiktok for shopping. An individual had to be 18 years of age or older to participate in the survey, which was optional. A person must also have purchased something within the past six months in order to be eligible to participate in the survey. According to Table 1, the characteristics of respondents were consistent with those general backgrounds of buyer on Tiktok platform. In terms of the latest buying; last month (29.1%), 2-3 month previous (34.8%), and 4-6 month previous (36.1%)

Table 1. Frequency distribution for the sociodemographic variables (N=1500).

Variable	Category	Frequency (%) (N=1500)
Gender	Male	454 (30.3)
	Female	814 (54.3)
	LGTBQ+	232 (15.5)
Age	18-22	210 (14.0)
	23-30	172 (11.5)
	31-40	532 (35.5)
	41-50	475 (31.6)
	51-60	111 (7.4)
Marital status	Single	869 (57.9)
	Married	518 (34.6)
	Divorced	113 (7.5)
Education	Lower than Bachelor	379 (25.3)
	Bachelor	607 (40.4)
	Higher than Bachelor	514 (34.3)
Occupation	Student	164 (10.9)
	Employee of company	406 (27.1)
	Government Employee	178 (11.9)
	Governor	242 (16.1)
	State enterprise employees	132 (8.8)
	Farmer	60 (4.0)
	Entrepreneur	195 (13.0)
	Freelance	84 (5.6)
	Unemployment	39 (2.6)
Buying experience on Tiktok	Food and beverage	897 (59.6)
	Cloth and dress	932 (62.1)

	Automobile accessory	104 (6.9)
	Household	623 (41.5)
	Skincare	598 (39.9)
	Stationery	114 (7.6)
	Perfume	432 (28.8)
	Jewelry	86 (5.7)
	Electrical equipment	193 (12.9)
Buying history	Last month	436 (29.1)
	2-3 month	523 (34.8)
	4-6 month	541 (36.1)

Scale development. Tiktok's shoppertainment indicator created from in-depth interviews and analytical indicators from interviews with 30 who the experienced Tiktok shopping, totaling 40 questions. Following that, all 40 indicators were used to solicit feedback from 5 online marketing experts in order to assess their suitability and consistency with the objectives (IOC). The result of the IOC assessment found that there were 11 variables that did not pass the criteria (less than 0.50), which, after consideration, were considered appropriate to be eliminated. There are only 29 items left that cover the issues you want to study. They were somewhat altered during this study to reflect shopping on the Tiktok platform. What are your favorite features for shopping on the Tiktok platform? was asked before each item was listed. Each response was given a Likert-type scale with five rating points, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." Gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, buying experience on Tiktok, and buying history were also included as sociodemographic factors for the sample description.

Procedure. The preliminary questionnaire that included Tiktok creator, Digital communication, and Tiktok content items was submitted to a panel of 9 experts for content validity testing. The panel included three digital communication professor, three Tiktok Creator and three shopper. Each panel member was requested to examine the overall content of the items under each of the stipulated factors. Following the feedback of the panel members, the preliminary instrument was modified in the areas of item adequacy, factor relevance, and word clarity. With the modified version of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to a small sample (n = 30) of Tiktok user who have shopping experience on Thiktok platform within the previous 6 months. The purpose of the pilot study was to further examine the content validity from the perspective of the targeted population. At this stage, suggested changes and improvements were all minor and primarily related to word clarifications. Completing a questionnaire, on average, took approximately 15 minutes. In terms of the sample size required for factor analyses (EFA and CFA) employed in this study, Comrey and Lee (1992) suggested at least 1000 respondents are excellent. Considering that the current study utilized both EFA and CFA for Tiktok's shoppertainment factors that had a total of 29 observed variables.

Data analytics. EFA and CFA were conducted using a randomly selected sample of 1500 individuals. To compute reliability coefficients, perform the EFA, and produce descriptive statistics for sociodemographic data, Tiktok's shoppertainment opinion, procedures in SPSS version 24.0 were used. An EFA was thought necessary as the first analytical step to look at the factor structure of the measure because the Tiktok's shoppertainment elements and items were constructed from multiple existing scales and indicators of prior studies. In order to eliminate redundant data, the main goal of the EFA was to isolate a singular, trustworthy, basic factor structure from a sample of variables that could be extrapolated to the entire universe of variables. After an EFA, internal consistency reliability was assessed by computing the factors' respective Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). Alpha factoring extraction, which was a favoured extraction method when the goal was to improve the dependability and generalizability of factors, was used in the EFA (Kaiser & Caffrey, 1965). To distinguish between different factors, the collected factors were rotated using the varimax rotation technique (Hendrikson & White, 1964). The factors and their items were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) a factor's eigenvalue had to be at least 1.0 (Kaiser, 1974); (b) an item's factor loading had to be at least.50 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994); (c) the factor had to have at least 3 items (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006); and (d) the identified factor and retained items had to be interpret. The number of extracted variables was also determined with the use of the screen plot test (Cattell, 1966). In order to do the CFA with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation for the retained Tiktok's shoppertainment components that were resolved from the EFA, procedures in the IBM AMOS version 24.0 (Arbuckle, 2016) were used. The five phases for conducting a CFA are (a) model specification, (b) model identification, (c) model estimation, (d) assessing model fit, and (e) model respecification, according to Bollen (1989) and Hair et al. (2006). In accordance with Hair et al. (2006)'s recommendations, a number of goodness of fit metrics were used, including the chi-square statistic (x2), normed chi-square (x2 /df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), good fit index (GFI), and expected cross-validation index (ECVI) (Bollen, 1989; Hu & Bentler, 1999, Arbuckle, 2016). According to Bollen, cutoff values for the normed chi-square that are less than 3.0 are thought to be a reasonable fit. Any RMSEA values under.05 are considered to demonstrate a close fit, according to Brown and Cudeck (1992). Hu and Bentler (1999), who made this suggestion more recently, said that an RMSEA value of.06 also signifies a good fit. Any RMSEA scores between.06 and.08 suggest a good fit. RMSEA values between.08 and.10 indicates fair fit. An inadequate fit is indicated by a value higher than.10 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). "The relative improvement in fit of the researcher's model compared with a baseline model (i.e., null model)" is how the CFI evaluates research models (Kline, 2005). Any value more than.90 denotes an acceptable match, and any value higher than.95 denotes a close fit, according to the CFI rule of thumb. Finally, the ECVI has no predefined criterion and measures the fit across samples. A smaller value of the ECVI indicates a better model fit, and it is typically used to compare models. The reliability of the scales was evaluated using three tests: average extracted variance, construct reliability (CR), and Cronbach's coefficient alpha (a) values (AVE). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommended that the newly created scale's Cronbach's alpha be cut off at.70. However, they went on to suggest that.80 be taken into account for the scale refinement study. In order to determine internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha, the recommended cut off value of.70 was selected because the current study's goal was to develop Tiktok's shoppertainment (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), CR is an internal consistency metric that takes into account all indicators' measurement mistakes. We used Fornell and Larcker's recommended CR threshold of.70. Using AVE is an alternate method to assess the latent construct's dependability. When compared to the variation caused by measurement errors across all indicators, AVE is the proportion of variance that is explained by the construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The benchmark for AVE was set at or above the.50 value proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). The procedures described by Fornell and Larcker were used to generate CR and AVE values because the AMOS application did not supply those numbers. With an item loading of at least.707 (i.e., an R^2 value below.50), indicator loadings and significant z-values were assessed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To assess how dissimilar the constructs were from one another, discriminant validity was also looked at. Two techniques were used to prove discriminant validity. When an interfactor correlation is less than.85, discriminant validity can be proven, claims Kline (2005). A squared correlation between two constructs should be less than the AVE value for any one of the two constructs, according to a more reliable method of testing discriminant validity proposed by Fornell and Larcker. Last but not least, a structural equation modeling (SEM) test was carried out in accordance with the instructions in the AMOS version 7.0. The goodness of fit level in the structural model was evaluated using the same fit index criteria as in the CFA.

Descriptive statistics for the Tiktok's shoppertainment variables are presented in Table 2. Of the 29 items, 21 had a mean score greater than 4.50 (i.e., the highestpoint on the five-point Likert scale). Of the variables in the scale, the 'funny' item had the highest mean score (M = 4.71; SD = 0.51) and the 'Not be subjected to advertising' item had the lowest mean score (M = 4.31; SD = 0.77). Additionally, skewness and kurtosis for the items were examined. For the skewness cut-off value, an absolute value of 3.0 would be considered extreme. For the kurtosis threshold value, an absolute score greater than 3.0 would be considered extreme (Chou & Bentler, 1995). In this study, all skewness and kurtosis values for the Tiktok's shoppertainment items were well within the acceptable threshold.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the Scale of Tiktok's Shoppertainment (N=1500).

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Concise content	4.67	.55	-1.56	2.47
2. It doesn't take long to see	4.65	.55	-1.43	2.05
3. There is the hit songs accompanying	4.63	.60	-1.58	2.61
4.funny	4.71	.51	-1.48	1.44
5. Shows content from trendy current	4.67	.57	-1.70	2.94
6. Parody joke clip	4.65	.56	-1.55	2.53
7. Not sexually abusive	4.61	.62	-1.62	2.81
8. Provide knowledgeable	4.70	.51	-1.45	1.33
9. Demonstrate how to use the product	4.67	.55	-1.57	2.52
10. Cover a well know personality	4.68	.54	-1.60	2.66
11. Product review	4.64	.61	-2.02	2.69
12. Real and sincere	4.33	.76	-.82	-.21
13. There is real trading	4.48	.67	-.97	.05
14. Free trade	4.46	.69	-1.01	.28
15. Personalize communication	4.27	.77	-.67	-.45
16. Anytime, anywhere can buy	4.42	.70	-.93	.13
17. Make money for sellers	4.43	.73	-1.09	.50
18. Selling Product 24 hours	4.43	.71	-.94	-.01
19. Buyers get the products they like	4.51	.67	-1.22	1.04
20. Feeling of one	4.53	.65	-1.14	.53
21. Not be subjected to advertising	4.31	.77	-.80	-.25
22. Advocate by the buyer as the creator	4.53	.67	-1.27	1.15
23. Way of consumption	4.61	.56	-1.15	.45
24. Tradition identity	4.67	.53	-1.29	.68
25. Tourist attraction	4.64	.58	-1.64	2.12
26. Consumption	4.59	.64	-1.62	2.14
27. Cloth and dressing	4.57	.66	-1.49	2.11
28. Way of life	4.52	.61	-1.01	.51
29. Local language	4.50	.70	-1.51	2.74

Exploratory Factor Analysis. An EFA was carried out with the initial data set in order to find a Tiktok's shoppertainment. The degree of common variance was outstanding, as evidenced by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value of.947, which exceeded the cut-off value of.80 (Kaiser, 1974). The sample was therefore sufficient for a factor analysis. A factor analysis was deemed necessary since Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) results of 20211.310 (p <.001) showed that the hypothesis that the variance and covariance matrix of the variables was an identity matrix was significantly rejected. 29 items met the retention criterion in the EFA, and four factors emerged that together accounted for 56.82% of the variance in the variables. Table 3displays the outcomes of the rotated pattern matrix from varimax rotation. Based on the established standard of an item loading of.5 0 or more, As a result, the four characteristics were classified as comfortable (six items), commercial (seven items), cultural (seven items), and creative content (1 1 items) (5 items). The factors' respective alpha coefficients were.9 1 ,.8 8 ,.8 5 , and.7 2 . Indicating that they were all internally consistent and reliable. The resolved factor structure was overall consistent with the conceptual model for developing the Tiktok's shoppertainment scale in this study. Only items that were retained in the EFA (29 items) were included in the subsequent CFA.

Table 3. Factor pattern matrix for the Scale of Tiktok's shoppertainment variables: alpha factoring with varimax rotation (n = 1500).

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Creative Content (11 items)				
TK5 Shows content from trendy current	.752			
TK2 It doesn't take long to see	.735			
TK11 Product review	.720			
TK7 Not sexually abusive	.699			
TK9 Demonstrate how to use the product	.679			
TK8 Provide knowledgeable	.663			
TK1 Concise content	.660			
TK10 Cover a well know personality	.656			
TK6 Parody joke clip	.650			
TK3 There is the hit songs accompanying	.645			
TK4 Funny	.634			
Cultural (7 items)				
TK25 Tourist attraction		.785		
TK27 Cloth and dressing		.757		
TK26 Consumption		.730		
TK29 Local language		.710		
TK23 Way of consumption		.638		
TK24 Tradition identity		.614		
TK28 Way of life		.577		
Commercial (6 items)				
TK14 Free trade			.761	
TK22 Advocate by the buyer as the creator			.742	
TK19 Buyers get the products they like			.740	
TK13 There is real trading			.729	
TK17 Make money for sellers			.719	
TK18 Selling Product 24 hours			.677	
Comfortable (5 items)				
TK20 Feeling of one				.707
TK16 Anytime, anywhere can buy				.704
TK12 Real and sincere				.660
TK15 Personalize communication				.626
TK21 Not be subjected to advertising				.625

Confirmatory factor analyses the second data set for the Tiktok's shoppertainment variables, which contained 29 items under four factors, was submitted to a CFA with ML estimation (Hair et al., 2006). Goodness of fit indexes revealed that the four-factor and 29-item measurement model did not fit the data well. The chi-square statistic was significant, indicating that the hypothesized model and the observed model had a statistically significant difference. Because chi-square value is known to be sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2005), alternative fit indices were further examined, including the normed chi-square, RMSEA, GFI, CFI, and ECVI. The normed chi-square (x^2 /df = 1.284) was above the suggested cut-off value (i.e., .90), indicating an overall lack of fit to the data. The model fit tests overall suggested a need for model respecification. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) and Arbuckle (2016), model respecification would be needed if the proposed model did not fit the data well. Model fitting with variable cut off method, one by one until the model passes the specified criteria. After careful consideration of statistical justifications, the decision to remove these items was made. As a result of the model respecification, a four-factor model with 9 items was conceptualized: creative content (3 items), commercial (2 items), cultural (2 items), and comfortable (2 items).

This four-factor model with 9 items was further submitted to a CFA. Overall, goodness of fit revealed that the five-factor model fit the data reasonably well. Chi-square statistic was significant (x^2 =26.963, p > .05). The normed chi-square (x^2 / df =1.284) was lower than the suggested cut-off value (i.e., < .05). Overall, the for-factor Tiktok's shoppertainment supported a parsimonious structure (Table 5). No interfactor correlations were above .85, ranging from .03 (between comfortable and commercial) to .77 (between commercial and creative content), indicating discriminant validity.

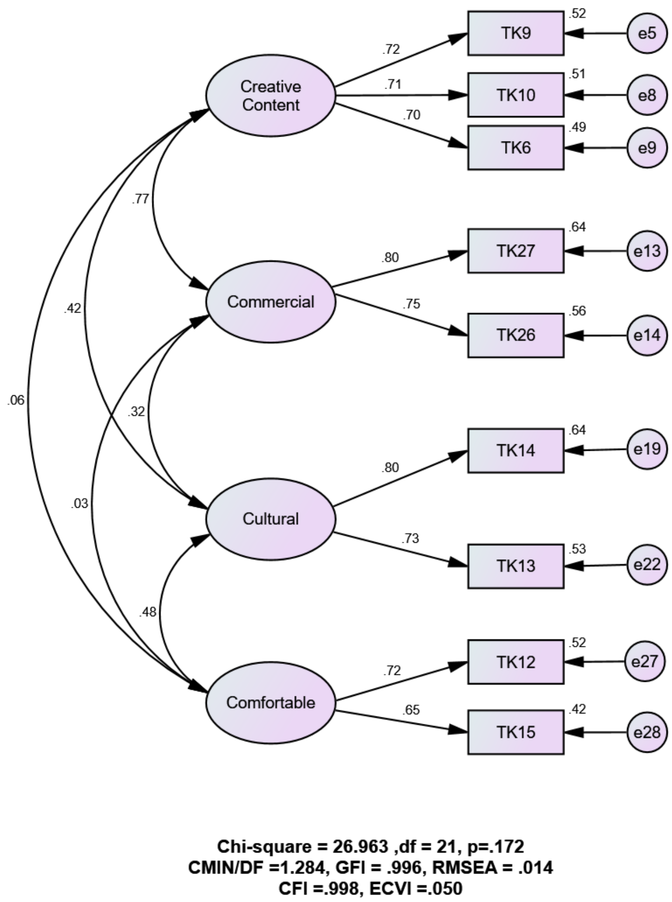
Table 4. Model fit of Tiktoks's shoppertainment (N=1500).

Model	P-value	X^2	df	$X^{2/df}$	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	ECVI
Four-factor model	0.172	26.963	21	1.284	0.014	0.998	0.996	0.05

Table 5. Indicator loadings, Critical ratios, Cronbach's alpha

	Indicator loadings	Critical ratios	Cronbach's alpha
Creative Content (3 items)			0.75
TK9 Demonstrate how to use the product	0.72		
TK10 Cover a well know personality	0.71	22.58	
TK6 Parody joke clip	0.70	22.45	
Cultural (2 items)			0.74
TK27 Cloth and dressing	0.80		
TK26 Consumption	0.75	22.19	
Commercial (2 items)			0.74
TK14 Free trade	0.80		
TK13 There is real trading	0.73	17.04	
Comfortable (2 items)			0.73
TK12 Real and sincere	0.72		
TK15 Personalize communication	0.65	10.81	

Figure 1. First-order confirmatory factor analysis for the Scale of Tiktok's shoppertainment model.



To examine the predictability of the Tiktok's shoppertainment factors, a SEM analysis was conducted. The Tiktok's shoppertainment items under the four factors were predicting variables and the items under the shopping experience were the criterion variables. The Tiktok's shoppertainment factor was found to have good factor loading and internal consistency. The overall model fit was good (X^2= 332.32, p>0.05, X^2/df = 1.28, CFI = .998, RMSEA = .014, GFI = 0.996, ECVI = 0.05). Having a satisfied model fit, it was appropriate to proceed with a SEM analysis.

Discussion. Tiktok shop is very popular and TikTok for Business is a complete digital marketing solution for businesses of all sizes. With the prominence of TikTok, a platform that connects entertainment and shopping together, it meets the needs of "shoppertainment." a phenomenon that is hot and catches the eye of today's online shoppers, in addition to helping to encourage shopping (Panpilas 2021). It is also a significant opportunity for brands to be discovered and reach new customer bases. One of the key phenomena that drives more people to shop online is the experience of happiness during shopping, known as Shoppertainment Especially nowadays that more and more people use shopping as a means of creating happiness. Therefore, it can be considered that shoppertainment It is an important phenomenon that shopping and entertainment are integrated. Until today, this has resulted in interesting shopping behaviors among people, particularly on TikTok, which is regarded as a platform that generates positive energy and provides people with happiness and entertainment. An increasing number of middle-aged online users start spending a lot of time and money on Tiktok platforms as a result of the popularity of live streaming services (Li & Kang, 2020).

According to the EFA and CFA analyses, Tiktok's shoppertainment components consisted with the study of Erizal (2021), creative content, cultural, commercial, and comfortable, consistent with the findings of There are many users of the tiktok program in the current pandemic, ranging from those who merely watch to those who become tiktok makers. The social media platform Tiktok uses audio and video. These media take the form of images and films that have had diverse musical styles juxtaposed. This media is a vehicle for sharing the originality and creativity of each user. The social networking platform Tik Tok offers its members the ability to utilize distinctive and amusing special effects. Users of this social media can feel delighted thanks to the videos they create with different types of music. Because they are so glad to utilize Tik Tok social media, users cannot use this medium only once or twice. Additionally, Tiktok has the power to subconsciously and compulsively persuade people to shop online. In addition, the study results of Amrudhia and Nurfebiaraning (2021), the charcter of popular online platform profiles among users include: Heard Words, Colour. Music, Picture, Seen Words and Movement. Not only entertainment content, but also selling products on Tiktok creates commercial value for sellers and create value for consumers until mutual benefits that Tiktok's advantages and capabilities ensure its e-commerce platform has a large user base and offers customers a high level of loyalty and happiness. They can predict the future by examining the internal and external strengths of their marketing strategy and resources. Due to TikTok's advantages, its e-commerce platform will have a large user base, a high degree of user happiness, and a devoted customer base (Ma & Yu, 2021).

The consumption culture on the platform for Tik Tok was initially created with the preferences of today's young consumers in mind. Example: Users can interact with young people by taking part in the platform's special youth group activities. Tik Tok platform culture The "beauty, fashion, and hilarious" components of the Tik Tok platform are consistent with the "concrete content" of young people's culture, which is mostly made up of language, fashion, consumption mode, leisure pursuit, marriage, and love mode. Most Tik Tok users are young individuals under 24 with a high school diploma or an equivalent education. Their affinity for the rapidly developing Tik Tok culture is a commendable assessment of cultural value. Additionally, those that use the Tik Tok site to consume actually identify as doing so. The types of consumption consumers choose are significantly influenced by their identities. For identifying the identity of popular cultural consumption, there are two main approaches: The first is to concentrate on your own eating. Users will purchase a product if it piques their interest and is within their pricing range. Users get a wholly immersive consumption experience on the platform as a result, which dramatically improves their understanding of consumption. The second strategy is to focus on consumers who promote consumption. They establish the identity of the dominant consumer culture and themselves through the Tik Tok platform (Zuo & Wang, 2019).

With all of the above, Tiktok's shoppertainment style has gained acceptance, liking, and popularity. It is based on marketing communications with interesting new methods and forms by using entertainment techniques to meet the needs, satisfaction, and comfort of consumers to the point of commercial benefit, reflect that the introduction of the Tiktok short video platform has altered both peoples' way of life and how culture is transmitted. The timeliness, and interactivity of video communication make it faster and more in-depth than other forms of communication (Cao, 2021; Zhang, 2021).

Implications and further research lines.

1. The causal variables should be studied in order to know the factors influencing to shoppertainment. to forecast the impact of factors that will influence the variables shoppertainment.

2. To confirm tht Tiktok's shoppertainment indicators by re-test with buyers in other countries to confirm the indicators for generalization

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Instagram shop made me buy it": The gender differences on purchase intention.

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Increased popularity of social commerce and the acceleration of digital transformation were driven by the implementation of Covid-19 movement restrictions or lockdown of non-essential areas of the economy (UNCTAD, 2021). Businesses have made the shift from traditional stores to online ones in response to consumer preferences. By merging traditional online shopping with social media, social commerce has become the cutting edge of the e-commerce industry. Social commerce, in contrast to more traditional forms of e-commerce technology, places a premium on creating a welcoming social environment in which customers feel comfortable engaging in a two-way conversation. It is projected that the social commerce marketin Malaysia would grow by 45.2% yearly to a total value of $1,327.5 million, as reported in the Q1 2022 Social Commerce Survey by Research and Markets. Industry experts project a CAGR of 41.2% for this sector in Malaysia over the next five years (Chevi, 2022). Social media platforms, especially Facebook (21.7 million audience) and Instagram (15.5 million audience reach) are where marketers should put their efforts to attract this group (iKala, 2021).

Instagram is an image-rich application which often influences consumers differently than other social media sites (Ting et al., 2015). Instagram Shop launched in Malaysia in October 2020, a new product labels feature enables company owners label and price their posts across feeds, Stories, and IGTV (Max, 2020; Fatmawati M & Ali, 2021). Clicking the "Shop" button on Instagram profiles gives shoppers more options and the virtual storefront will display product measurements, color options, and specs on a brand's profile (Dopson, 2022). Instagram has become into a hub for product discovery, housing anything from worldwide premium names to rare antique finds and homemade items. Instagram vendors interact with consumers in the comments, making online purchasing feel personal. Some shops let you order by commenting, while others supply their WhatsApp numbers, email addresses or links to their websites. Instagram made this feature accessible as a method to help micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) transform to digital platforms and expand their participation in the digital economy (Fatmawati M & Ali, 2021).

As social commerce has expanded, researchers have examined how users feel about the Instagram Shopping function and if they intend to make a purchase. This is to have a deeper understanding of how individuals utilize social commerce platforms. Fatmawati M & Ali (2021) studied Jakarta internet users who have purchased online but never on Instagram. The findings showed that Perceived Usefulness increases purchasing intentions. This shows that the user's impression of the application's advantages directly affects Instagram purchasing intentions. While Perceived Ease of Use has a favorable but not statistically significant impact on purchase intentions. This suggests that Instagram's ease doesn't immediately entice Instagram Shop users to buy. (Fatmawati M & Ali, 2021). Another survey was conducted among Instagram users in Greater Jakarta who focus on Generation Y and have experienced using or purchased products from the Instagram Shop (Jayadi et al., 2022). This study found that perceived information quality improves consumer satisfaction with s-commerce features.

and makes online purchase decisions more rational. Consumers trust online retailers who utilize Instagram Shop to sell their items, thus they want to buy from them. Another significant aspect that influences the purchasing pattern of consumers who do their shopping online is their gender. According to Rodgers and Harris (2003), there is a significant gender gap in the perspectives held towards the practice of internet purchasing.

Report by Kemp (2022) showed that Instagram has a 11.1% or increase 1.6 million potential audience that marketers can reach with ads. This represents 52.6% of the total internet users' audience reach. These numbers show the significant role that Instagram has as a social platform. Consequently, it is essential to determine how the factors perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use impact Instagram shoppers' buy intent (Pookulangara et al., 2017). Moreover, trust is a key factor in the online purchasing environment (Hajli et al., 2017). The extent to which Malaysian consumers trust the vendor is a metric that requires more exploration. Since online transactions are not conducted face-to-face, purchasersoften want trust, credibility and helpful information to better comprehend shops and items (Limet al., 2014).

This study's major objective is to investigate the influence of Instagram Shop features on consumers' purchasing intentions. There will be theoretical and practical benefits from this study. First, although studies of online business have increased over the past few years, studies of Instagram Commerce are only getting started due to the relative newness and fluidity of the platform's payment options (Nedra et al., 2019). Contributing on the theoretical side, we expand and experimentally evaluate the integrative model of variables impacting the customer attitude to utilize the Instagram Shop feature, which in turn influences the purchase intention, thus enhancing the literature on social commerce. Second, several authors predict that Instagram commerce will be the dominant sales platform of the future; so, there is scholarly interest in examining it (Assadam, 2019). Thirdly, this research will have practical implications for online retailers regarding the utilization of the Instagram Shop feature to the company's advantage, as well as the design of gender-based strategies. The findings provide insights that have substantial implications for research and practice, which can assist in facilitating the adoptionof Instagram Shop features among online micro, small and medium-sized retailers in Malaysia.

Social Commerce. The idea of social commerce has been developed by several researchers in a lot of differentways throughout the years. According to Esmaeili et al. (2015), social commerce is "an Internet-based commercial application that utilizes Web 2.0 technology and social media and permits user-generated content and social interactions." In addition to this, Liang and Turban (2014) define social commerce as the practice of conducting commercial transactions throughthe utilization of Web 2.0 technologies. Some examples of web 2.0 technologies are social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. From a sociological pointof view, social commerce may be seen as being connected to the utilization of online social groupings by web-based commercial enterprises. Social commerce focuses primarily on the influence of social impact, which modifies consumer cooperation (Kim & Srivastava, 2007). Whiteside et al. (2017) developed a more all-encompassing definition of social commerce, which they defined as "e-commerce transactions conducted via social media". According to

Marsden (2010), social commerce was defined by psychology as the result of silent information offered by network community members for online acquiring and selling activities. Additionally, Han et al. (2018) analyzed 22 definitions of social commerce before developing their own. They concluded that "social commerce is a new business model of e-commerce that combines Web 2.0 technology and social media to support social-related trade activities."

Because of Web 2.0, it is now feasible to do business via the internet in an environment that focuses more on people and the interactions they have with one another than it does on the goods themselves (Wigand et al., 2008). Both the term "web-based social networking" and the term "Web 2.0" refer to Internet-based services that were designed with the idea of linking shared intelligence in mind. Web 2.0 may be thought of as both a concept and a platform for doing so (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Because of this, the technology, and applications of Web

2.0 are being utilized to encourage people to share their interests with one another, regardless of whether they have any ties in real life. Since then, a new sub-genre of e-commerce known as social commerce has emerged. This type of e-commerce is distinguished from traditional e-commerce in that it facilitates online buying and selling by utilizing web-based social networks, personal connections, and contractual obligations with customers (Shen & Eder, 2009).

People gravitate toward Instagram as a popular social media site because it allows them to see visually appealing photos and short videos. Because of this, a rising number of people are using Instagram, which forces online shops to sell their items via Instagram (Sihombing et al., 2020) Millennials, who are known for their adaptability and quick thinking, make Instagrams target market. This is another aspect that contributes to the success of Instagram. Advertisements and content on social media sites are being made shoppable so that users may quickly make purchases via such platforms (D'Arcangelo, 2021).

Purchase Intention on Social Commerce. Consumer buying intentions are directly tied to the possibility that consumers would buy a product from a brand or the degree to which there is a potential that they will shift from one brand to another (Fatmawati M & Ali, 2021). According to Soeaidy et al. (2018), buy intentionsare a sort of consumer behavior that reflects the amount of commitment to completing a purchase. In other words, purchase intentions show how seriously consumers intend to committo making a purchase. Purchase intention is the impulse to acquire or choose a product or service based on personal experience, use, and desire. This urge may be described as the driveto acquire or select an object (Keller & Kotler, 2017). The key concentration of the TechnologyAcceptance Model, which is widely regarded as the preeminent theory around predictingan individual's intentions with regard to the use of technology, is on an individual's desire to make a purchase of some kind (Pavlou, 2014). For instance, to sway the purchase intention of consumers who are taking part in social commerce, extra considerations may be necessary. These factors will eventually help those customers create purchase intentions. The components may be categorized as things like the brand, the pricing, the quality, the innovation,the information, and the performance of the brand, in addition to other features like impulsiveness (Leo et al., 2005). Because of these findings, the term "buy intention"shall henceforth refer to the propensity of Instagram users to make purchases online.

Hypotheses Formulation. Referring to Davis's (1985) Technology Acceptance Model, the term "perceived usefulness" stands for the extent to which one believes that making use of a certain technology would enhance his or her job execution. Davis was the one who initially suggested using this definition. Based on TAM theory, much research has been done to further strengthen the meaning of perceived usefulness. According to Fatmawati M & Ali (2021), usefulness can alsobe defined in terms of perceived usefulness or the level to which one thinks that using a pieceof technology would boost his or her productivity in the workplace. Previous research has beendone on the relationship between the perception of one's own usefulness and the desire to makea purchase (Gefen et al., 2003; Herzallah et al., 2022; Makmor et al., 2019). Gefen et al. (2003) conducted research on experienced and beginner users of e-commerce websites, and the findings revealed that "repeat customers trusted the e-vendor more, judged the website to be more helpful and easier to use, and were more encouraged to purchase from it" (Gefen et al., 2003). Another study was done on consumer shopping behavior on Instagram Commerce among the Spanish population, and the results showed that the perceived usefulness ofInstagram Commerce had a major impact on the intention to buy (Herzallah et al., 2022). According to Makmor et al. (2019), it was shown that the perceived usefulness of the products was a key factor in determining the purchase intentions of Malaysian consumers participating in social commerce. Considering these considerations, the concept of "Perceived Usefulness" hasthus been selected as an independent variable in the course of this research.

H1: Perceived Usefulness of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram.

Based on the definition in TAM theory, perceived ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person thinks that employing a certain technology would be free of effort" (Davis, 1985). Research conducted by Gefen et al. (2003) proved that consumers' willingness to inquire about and make a purchase of a product is affected by their impression of how simple it is to use. Another research, this one conducted by See et al. (2012), explores the variables that impact the intention of young Malaysian purchasers to make an online purchase on social networking platforms. They also proved that the consumer's willingness to make a purchase through online social media is positively impacted by the perception of how easy it is to utilize the platform (See et al., 2012). Recent research conducted by Al-Adwan (2019) examines the primary factors that are driving consumers' adoption of social commerce online shopping in Jordan. The results indicate that consumers' perceptions of the usefulness and usability of the platform have a positive impact on trust, which in turn influences buy intention and actual purchase. According to the results of these studies and the TAM theory, the perceived ease of use had a substantial effect on customer's' intentions to make purchases using social commerce. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived Ease of Use of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram.

The phrase perceived information quality implies that the degree to which individuals who consume information believe it is suitable for the purposes for which it was intended (Jayadi et al., 2022). In addition, Xu et al. (2013) emphasize that the perceived quality of information is the consumer's opinion of the expression and understanding of the communicator's message. Research conducted by Maia et al. (2017) investigates the aspects and features that impact the participation of Brazilian consumers in social commerce on Facebook. Specifically, the study focuses on the role of Facebook and one of the conclusions is that the quality of the information provided to customers is the factor that has the most impact on the level of involvement they have with social commerce (Maia et al., 2017). In the most recent study of user behavior of Instagram Shop features on purchase intention, which was carried out by Jayadi et al. (2022), the researchers discovered that the perceived information quality has a substantial domination on customer satisfaction, and there is not a strong association between being satisfied and having the intention to make a purchase. (Jayadi et al., 2022).

Using the research of Almahamid et al. (2010) as a model, the perceived information quality may be evaluated according to its adequateness, completeness, and diagnostic. The amount of detail on the information quality that is necessary to meet the expectations of the user is referred to as its adequacy. The degree to which the information is complete is determined by whether it contains all the relevant particulars and is presented in its full. The ability of individuals to create opinions or diagnoses based on the information that they have gathered is referred to as diagnostic (Almahamid et al., 2010). The information provided by the Instagram Shop feature includes the following: the name of the product, photographs of theproduct, a description of the product, the cost of the product, a link to see the product on the website, and other things that are comparable to the product that is being sold (Law, 2022). It is thought, based on the results of past research, that the perceived information quality has a substantial impact on the intentions to make a purchase via social commerce. Consequently, the following hypothesis is put up for consideration.

H3: Perceived Information Quality of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram.

The idea of trust may be summed up as the combination of a feeling of safety and a willingness to depend on another person or object. Trust can be earned or earned through time (Chung & Kwon, 2009). One way to describe trust is as a belief, confidence, attitude, or expectation about the dependability of another person. Another way to define trust, as offered by Chen (2006), is as a behavioral goal or action that incorporates vulnerability and uncertainty. Trust is one of the most critical factors in determining the level of success that can be achieved in online salesand transactions. The explanation for this is because all they do is gather information about the various items and vendors, but they have no way of knowing whether the seller can be trusted. It is hard to do business via the internet if clients do not trust the seller (Jayadi et al., 2022). According to Alotaibi et al. (2019), it has been shown that trust is associated with higherpurchase intentions on Instagram as a social commerce platform in Saudi Arabia. The realm ofinternet business places a significant premium on the concept of trust (Hajli et al., 2016).

Research by Jayadi et al. (2022) mentioned that for businesses and online retailers to become eligible to launch an official Instagram store, they first need to have their accounts reviewed. Because the user, and not the machine, undertakes the complete review process for Instagram Shop apps, the possibility of approval errors is significantly reduced. Instagram insists that the shop function be connected to an external website; after that, the company willevaluate the store and give its approval (Instagram, 2019). Because of this, Instagram users aremore likely to make purchases or to indicate that they intend to make purchases soon (Jayadi et al., 2022). According to the results of this study, it is thought that one of the key factors that influences the desire of consumers to make a purchase is the level of perceivedtrust that they have in the seller and platform. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

H4: Perceived Trust in Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Intention on Instagram.

Previous research on consumer behavior has operated on the assumption that the gender of the customer has a substantial influence on the behaviors and reactions of consumers (Pascual-Miguel et al., 2015). males are more likely to shop online than women (Huang & Yang, 2010). However, other academics show that gender does not have a substantial role, and that men's and women's online behaviors are not noticeably different (Alreck & Settle, 2002; Bhatnagar et al., 2000). It's possible that there aren't really any major distinctions between male and female attitudes and actions regarding internet activities (Law & Ng, 2016). Considering this debate, thisstudy aims to investigate, within the context of Instagram's Shop function, the purchasing intentions of different gender groups in Malaysia.

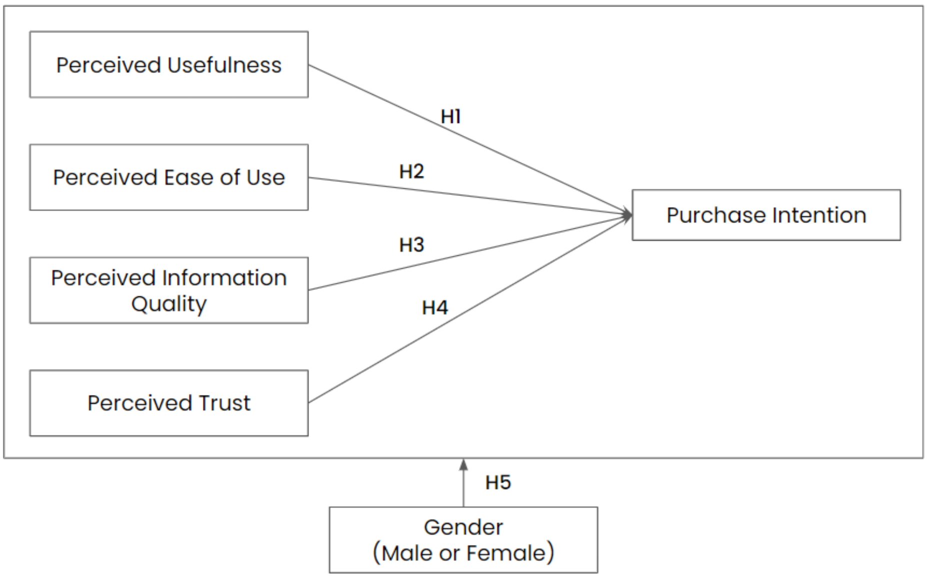
H5: Customer Purchase Intention on Instagram using the Instagram Shop feature will differ for male and female.

Originally, the Theory Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which was presented by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. TRA subsequently became highly famous and was extensively utilized to anticipate human behavior in a variety of scientific applications and TAM's origins may be traced back to these two theories (Chen et al., 2002). Specifically, TRA was built so that it could predict a person's future conduct. The theory proposes that a person's volitional (voluntary) action may be anticipated by that person's attitude toward that activity as well as that person's assessment of the opinions of others about whether he or she should or should not execute that behavior(See et al., 2012). Referencing the TRA model, Fred D. Davis produced this theory, which is known as the Technology Acceptance Model, which describes the interaction between externalelements and interior factors (beliefs, attitudes, and interests) (Fatmawati M & Ali, 2021).

The TAM theory postulates that a single person's behavioral intent is primarily influenced by two factors: the perceived usefulness of an action and the perceived ease with which it may be performed. Davis determined that the variable subjective norms had a minuscule impact on the behavioral intention, hence he decided against including it in the TAM. The reason for this decision was because Davis evaluated it (See et al., 2012). As a result, TAM adopted and adapted into the theoretical framework that was used in this research. Both factors that make up TAM, which are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, were included into the research model for this study. These two independent factors are then used to evaluate the consumer purchase intention on Instagram Shop. Perceived Information Quality and Perceived Trust are two additional factors that have been introduced to the study model to get a deeper conception of how users behave while using the Instagram Shop feature, which ultimately results in the intention to make a purchase. As the paper title suggest, this study is focusing on consumer purchase intention and how the dependents variable directly influence this, without considering the attitude impact. The computation of these two variables is based on prior research carried out in the field of social commerce.

Based on the above discussion, Figure 1 shows the theoretical research model.

Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework.



In summary, the past research enhanced our understanding of the influencing factors of consumer purchase intention on social commerce. Therefore, influencing factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived information quality and perceived trust together with a robust TAM model is used to conduct this study

Research Design. According to Kothari (1985), a design for research is a framework that is used in the process of collecting data, as well as measuring and analyzing data. It is used to acquire and gather datathat is connected to a certain issue, and it does it in a way that requires less work, money, and time than traditional methods (Kothari, 1985). In the interests of this research,many samples are required so a quantitative research method is used. As a result of quantitative research leading to the generation of numerical data, the SPSS program is used for conducting analyses.

The clarity of the research topic will assist to identify the analytical units as well as the suitable sample size required to produce a relevant result (DiscoverPhDs, 2020). Individuals, groups of individuals, things such as tables, chairs, and books, geographical units such as states or counties, social factors such as births, deaths, marital status, and so on are some examples (DiscoverPhDs, 2020). This study concentrates on the individual level of the unit of analysis to comprehend how user behavior in using the Instagram Shop function influences purchase intentions in social commerce.

A population is defined as "any collection of defined groupings of human people or non-human things such as objects, academic institutions, time units, regions, item prices, and so on." (Wani, 2014). The population is sometimes described as the whole group to be examined (Kowalczyk & Airth, 2022). Instagram has set a minimum age of 13 for account holders and requires new users to disclose this information when they join up. As a result, the target audience in this study includes respondents born between 1967 and 2003, who are presently 18to 54 years old which accounts for 84.4% of all social media users in Malaysia as of January 2022. The responder must be of Malaysian nationality given that the scope of the study will beconducted in Malaysia.

The term "sample" refers to a selection made from the whole of the population, while "sampling" refers to the act of making such a selection from among the members of the population (Wani, 2014). The study of this sample group allows conclusions and generalizations about the overall population to be made. The working hypothesis is that what can be deduced about the sample may be extrapolated to the whole population and shown to be true. However, it is not always true since it is dependent on how the sample is drawn. The above assumption is valid if the sample is a representation of the population (Wani, 2014). Thisresearch adopted convenience sampling, i.e., sampling from the whole population; a kind of non-probability sampling in which data is acquired from readily accessible samples of populations. These forms of sampling aid in the speedy completion of large-scale surveys whilesaving costs (Cho & Geetha, 2019).

Based on the proposed theoretical framework, the sample size computed using the G*Power method with an effect size of 0.15, an alpha value of 0.05, a power value of 0.8, and number of predictors of 5. As a result, several 92 respondents are needed to fulfill the minimum size sample in order to get a desirable result. Upon completion of data collection, a total of 162 responses were collected and only 92 responses are valid for further analysis. Out of these 162 respondents, 108 are female and 54 are male. 70 responses were eliminated as the respondents are not Malaysian and have no experience using Instagram Shop previously. Respondents are needed to have experience using Instagram Shop since the research is done to analyze the acceptance of the technology that leads to purchase intentions.

The research instrument used to record the required data for this research is a questionnaire. The draft questionnaire in Appendix A was incorporated and adapted from prior research, thesis, and professional literature relevant to the investigation. The questionnaire title and study purpose are introduced at the start of the questionnaire to help respondents comprehend the subject and viewpoint. The introduction also includes a quick explanation of how to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire includes six sections and the first section of demographic survey questions. Respondents then are led to the subsequent sections to answer each of the items stated under each construct in the proposed theoretical framework. Starting from section 2, each item utilizes the 5-point Likert scale, which has five points for responses that range from 5 which indicate strongly agree to 1 which indicate strongly disagree.

This research employed a web-based survey as a technique of data gathering since it could reach vast groups and gather bigger volumes of data than traditional survey methods.The survey is fast and easy to perform, and it is less costly than mailed surveys (Razavieh et al., 2009). The questionnaire for the survey was designed using Google Forms was distributed on social media platforms includingInstagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, in addition to the instant messaging service WhatsApp. The results of an analysis were saved in an Excel file after being exported from a Google Form.

For this quantitative study, the usage of SPSS was deemed appropriate due to the program's ability to both provide numerical data for analysis and transform raw data into relevant insights. Upon completion of data collection, the data was converted and cleaned to match the SPSS software standards. In the process of data analysis, the first step includes making sure that the data that need to be analyzed can in fact be analyzed using linear regression. This verification is an essential element of the process. In this research this assumption are examine by carry out the Normality Test and the results are discuss in subsection 5.2 of the paper.

Results and Discussion. Following the completion of data collecting, the next step is data analysis. The data was converted and cleaned throughout this procedure to match the SPSS software standards. The assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, correlation, and reliability must first be verified before running and interpreting the results of the regression. Hence, analyses of descriptive analysis, normality test, reliability test, correlation analysis are conducted. Then, regression analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis were carried out to validate the hypothesis proposed as part of the research.

A descriptive statistical analysis that included frequency and percentage was used to show the demographics of the people who participated in the study. The following categories are considered relevant factors: gender, age, ethnicity, profession, and monthly expenditures. During this study, a total of 92 replies were obtained and then analyzed as part ofthe sample. According to the respondents' demographic features, there are a total of 82% femalerespondents and 18% male respondents. The bulk of the population is people aged 25 to 34 years old. Regarding ethnicity, the majority are Malay (48%), followed by Chinese (36%), Indian (15%), and others (1%). In terms of residence regions, many respondents come from either the Central area (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, and Putrajaya; 38% of the total) or the Northern region (Perlis, Kedah, Penang, and Perak; 38% of the total). 41% of the respondentshad a monthly online buying budget of less than RM200, while the bulk of the respondents (90%) have been using Instagram for more than three years. Overall, the demographics of the respondents span a wide range of categories, including different gender, age groups, ethnicity,and region.

To derive accurate inferences from the regression findings, the residuals should have a normal distribution. The residuals are the error terms, or the discrepancies between the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable. According to Cho & Geetha (2019), the focus of the normality test is to find out if the gathered data under examination exhibit the features of a normal distribution. The degree to which a distribution of data deviates from symmetry around the mean is the skewness. If the skewness value is zero, the distribution is symmetrical; a significant positive skewness has a long right tail, whereas a significant negative skewness has a long-left tail. The kurtosis, on the other hand, measures the amount to which there are outliers. A kurtosis scores close to zero statistically reflects a normal distribution. A negative kurtosis implies that the data have fewer outliers than a normal distribution, while a positive kurtosis suggests that the data have more outliers than a normal distribution. A score of +/-1 for skewness and kurtosis is considered as excellent, but +/-2 is often acceptable. Values that are greater than plus or minus two indicate a deviation from symmetry and a rejection of the normal distribution (IBM, 2022).

The results indicated that the skewness value ranged from -0.864 to 0.057, with -0.057 being the value with the most level of skewness and -0.864 representing the value withthe least level of skewness. The kurtosis test results showed that the range was between -1.093and 0.878, which indicates that 0.0878 was the maximum kurtosis value and -1.093 was the minimum kurtosis value. Overall, the skewness and kurtosis values fall between the score of +1 and -1. Except for PEU3, which has a kurtosis score of -1.093, which is still within the allowed range of +/-2. As a result, the data are decently asymmetrical and normally distributed.

The word "homoscedasticity" is used to describe the phenomena that determines whether these residuals are distributed evenly or if they tend to cluster at certain values and spreadwidely at other values (Statistics Solutions, 2022). Statisticians call data "homoscedastic" if ithas any features like a shotgun blast of randomly distributed data. Heteroscedasticity, the inverse of homoscedasticity, may cause the data to take on a shape like a cone or a fan. Natural instances of heteroscedasticity are possible as well. To verify this hypothesis, a scatterplot was drawn comparing the expected values to the residuals. As seen in Figure 3, the residual graph exhibits uniform random dispersion around the 0-horizontal line. However, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the graph alone.

The Breusch-Pagan Test was used to further verify the homoscedasticity. The following are the null and alternative hypotheses used in the test:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Homoscedasticity is present; the residuals are distributed with equal variance (Zach, 2020).

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Heteroscedasticity is present; the residuals are not distributed with equal variance (Zach, 2020).

The results of the Breusch-Pagan Test are shown in Table 4, and its p-value of 0.093 indicates that it is significantly higher than the threshold of p-value equal to 0.05. Therefore, homoscedasticity is present in the regression model, and the null hypothesis is accepted.

The aim of calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient, commonly known as r, according to Hauke and Kossowski (2011), is to determine the linear strength that exists between the dependent variable and the independent variable. This may be accomplished by comparing the dependent variable's value to the independent variable's value. Pearson's correlation coefficient, according to Adler and Parmryd (2010), ranges from -1 to 1, depending on the context. The value -1 indicated a negative correlation, the value 1 indicated a positivecorrelation, and the value 0 indicated that there was no link between the variables under consideration. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized in this study to examine the link between a customer's desire to make an online purchase and the variables of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived information quality, and perceived trust. All the study's independent variables had p-values less than 0.05, indicating that the researchwas statistically significant. The perceived usefulness of the Instagram Shop function is relatedto the consumer's intention to make a purchase on Instagram Shop ($r=0.370$, $p<0.05$). These results offered evidence that supplemented previous research. Gefen et al. (2003), Herzallah etal. (2022), and

Makmor et al. (2019) discovered that the perceived utility of Instagram Shop had a substantial influence on purchase intent.

Additionally, a positive connection is being shown between purchase intent and consumers' perceived ease of use ($r = 0.482$, $p<0.05$), correlating with the results of the previous research. The findings from research conducted by Al-Adwan (2019) showed that consumers' perceptions of the usefulness and usability of the platform have a positive impact on trust, which in turn influences purchase intention and actual purchase. Another research, this one carried out by See et al. (2012), also proved that the consumer's willingness to make a purchasethrough online social media is positively impacted by the perception of how easy it is to utilizethe platform (See et al., 2012).

The findings of the relationship between purchase intention and perceived information quality indicated a positive correlation ($r = 0.469$, $p<0.05$). Previous studies have shown a diverse array of findings in respect to this correlation. A user behavior research of Instagram Shop features on purchase intention conducted by Jayadi et al. (2022) found that perceived information quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. However, there is not a strong association between being satisfied and having the desire to make a purchase (Jayadi et al., 2022). On the other hand, research conducted by Maia et al. (2017) demonstrates that the quality of the information provided to customers is the single most critical factor that influences consumer involvement in social commerce. The results showed that there is a crucial correlation between the Malaysian consumer's intention to make a purchase and the degree to which they trust the Instagram Shop feature ($r=0.534$, $p<0.05$). The results are further supported by the previous studies. According to the findings of research done by Jayadi et al. (2022), it is difficult for consumers to do transactionsonline if they do not trust the seller. Based on the research findings of Alotaibi et al. (2019) and Hajli et al. (2016), it has been shown that trust is associated with higher purchase intentionson Instagram as a social commerce platform and the realm of internet business places a significant premium on the concept of trust.

At the same time, the composite of Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to evaluate the results of the reliability test. The adjectives ``consistent”, “stable," and "reliable" apply if the researchers get the same predicted outcome several times. Cronbach's Alpha is a statistic that, according to Heale and Twycross (2015), academics use rather often to estimate the degree to which the variables are internally stable. This may be done by determining the correlation between two or more variables. Cronbach's Alpha never produces a result higher than 1, and the acceptance of dependability value must always be always more than 0.7 (Heale & Twycross 2015; Cho & Geetha, 2019). It can be seen in the following table that the overall variables have a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.937. This demonstrates that there is a strong reliability. Cronbach'sAlpha for both the dependent and independent variables falls within a range that stretches from0.841 to 0.925. Because these numbers are within this range of 1 and 0.7, hence the Cronbach'sAlpha results indicate that the data is reliable and acceptable.

Table 1. Result of Reliability Test.

Variables	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Overall variables	0.937	22
PU	0.925	5
PEU	0.879	5

PIQ	0.88	5
PT	0.887	4
PI	0.841	3

Gogtay and Thatte (2016), in their research mentioned that regression analysis is used to find out how the independent factors will affect the dependent variable and what kind of relationship will develop between the two. Furthermore, regression analysis is utilized to find out how the independent variable will affect the dependent variable. As per Bush and Burns's (2012) analysis, R Square might have any value between 0 and 1 because of the experiment.Values of R Squared close to 1 indicate a strong correlation between the independent and dependent factors. However, if R Square is near to 0, it's possible that the independent variabledoesn't have much of an effect on the dependent variable.

The values for R and R Square are shown in Table 2. The simple correlation, which is what R stands for, is 0.617, which shows that there is a strong relationship connecting the independent and dependent variables in the framework proposed. The R Square value, which can be found in the column labeled "R Square," indicates the percentage of the total variation in the dependent variable, which is the consumer's purchase intention, that can be accounted for by the independent variables, which are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived information quality, and perceived trust. R Square has a value of 0.381, which when translated to percentage is 38.1%. In this scenario, the independent factors of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived information quality, and perceived trust could only contribute to 38.1% of the customers' intents to make an online purchase on Instagram Shop.

Table 2 Regression analysis model summary results.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.617a	0.381	0.352	0.7415

a Predictors: (Constant), PT, PU, PEU, PIQ

The Anova table provides information on the degree to which the regression equation corresponds to the data. The outcome of the regression equation was (F (4,87) = 13.36, p 0.05) Because the outcome demonstrates that the p-value was less than 0.05, this indicates that the regression and framework model are appropriately fit to the research. Overall, the regression model provides strong evidence for the predicted value of the result.

Table 3. Regression analysis ANOVA results.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.379	4	7.345	13.36	<.001b
	Residual	47.829	87	0.55		
	Total	77.208	91			

a Dependent Variable: PI
b Predictors: (Constant), PT, PU, PEU, PIQ

Table 5 displays the findings from the coefficients table, which gives us the information required to predict the consumer purchase intention as a dependent variable based on the independent variables. This information also allows us to determine whether theindependent variables or predictors make a statistically significant contribution to the model. The beta value of the first independent variable, which is Perceived Usefulness, comes in at 0.062, and the p-value for this variable is 0.606%.The impact of perceived usefulness on consumers' propensity to make an online purchase is not statistically significant here and thusthe hypothesis *H1: Perceived Usefulness of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram* is false and should be rejected. This result may be due to most respondents in this study were in the age group of 25

to 34 years old, 71% of the total number of respondents. Respondent of this age range

The p-value for the second independent variable, which is the Perceived Ease of Use, is 0.011, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. Hence, the hypothesis *H2: Perceived Ease of Use of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram* is true and accepted. Following that, the beta value for the Perceived Information Quality came in at 0.004, and the p-value was 0.981, which is more than

0.05. The perceived information quality has no impact on the consumer's intention to make a purchase on Instagram Shop under the present framework. Hence, hypothesis *H3: Perceived Information Quality of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer Purchase Intention on Instagram* is rejected.

Perceived Trust is the last independent variable, and it has a beta value of 0.485 and a p-value that is not more than 0.05. It proved that hypothesis *H4: Perceived Trust in Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Intention on Instagram* is true and accepted. When comparing the independent variables beta values, such as perceived usefulness (0.062), perceived ease of use (0.364), and perceived information quality (0.485), perceived trust had the highest beta value overall (0.485). Therefore, perceived trust is the factor that has the most impact on customers' intentions to make online purchases in Malaysia. Next in line is the perceived ease of use, which has a beta value of 0.364.

Table 4. The Coefficients results of regression analysis.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.124	0.479		0.259	0.796
	PU	0.062	0.12	0.055	0.517	0.606
	PEU	0.364	0.141	0.299	2.584	0.011
	PIQ	0.004	0.151	0.003	0.023	0.981
	PT	0.485	0.133	0.402	3.66	<.001

a Dependent Variable: PI

The Pillai's Trace Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was utilized to investigate Hypothesis 5 that determines whether or not there are differences in the purchase intentions of male and female Malaysians who use Instagram Shop. Because it is more reliablethan the other multivariate test criteria, Pillai's criterion was used to determine whether the results were significant (Hair et al., 1998). The results of the MANOVA test indicate that there was not a major difference between the male and female respondents, as shown by the Fvalue of 0.724 and the p value of 0.607, which is p more than 0.05. It can be concluded that thegender of the customer, whether it male or female, does not have a statistically significant impact in determining their intention to make a purchase through Instagram Shop. Based on these results the hypothesis *H5: Customer Purchase Intention on Instagram using the Instagram Shop feature will differ for male and female* is rejected.

Table 5. MANOVA results.

	Mean				
	Male	Female	df	F	Sig
MANOVA – Pillai's Trace test			5	0.724	0.607
Univariate F-tests					
PU	3.529	3.880	1	2.607	0.110
PEU	3.859	3.965	1	0.273	0.602
PIQ	3.529	3.696	1	0.609	0.437
PT	3.324	3.387	1	0.940	0.760
PI	3.510	3.436	1	0.089	0.766

Considering the expansion of social commerce and the use of Instagram in Malaysia, determiningwhat elements affect a consumer's decision to make a purchase over the internet can assist sellers in targeting these customers and re-building consumers' confidence in the process of online shopping for goods and services offered through social commerce. The four variables that have been presented at the early part of this research hypothesis are as follows: PerceivedUsefulness (H1), Perceived Ease of Use (H2), Perceived Information Quality (H3), and Perceived Trust (H4) of Instagram's Shop feature has a positive and significant effect on the customer purchase intention on Instagram. These hypotheses are constructed based on previousstudies and the theory of Technology Acceptance Model. While the final hypothesis 5 is customer purchase intention via the Instagram Shop function will result in different outcomes for male and female users. Results and data analysis show only two of these five hypotheses are accepted among the Malaysian sample respondents who have experience with Instagram Shop, while the other three are shown to be false.

The hypotheses 1 and 3 are rejected and do not align with the findings of prior research, which found that a consumer's perceived utility, and perceived information quality all influence their intent to make a purchase via social commerce (Gefen et al., 2003; Herzallah et al., 2022; Makmor et al., 2019; Jayadi et al., 2022; Maia et al., 2017). Therefore, it seems that Malaysians do not consider elements such as perceived usefulness and information quality to be contributors to their intention to make a purchase on Instagram Shop. Hypothesis 5 was also rejected since there is no difference between Malaysian male and female in their purchase intention on Instagram Shop. This might be because the many types of products or categories that are offered on Instagram Shop are catered to beauty and fashion products mostly. This is supported by old studies Alreck & Settle (2002) Bhatnagar, Misra, & Rao (2000) and a more recent study by Law & Ng (2016), that proved that gender does not have any specific impact towards online behavior. Both the accepted hypothesis 2 on perceived ease of use and hypothesis 4 on perceived trust in the system were accepted and strongly supported by the prior research (Al-Adwan, 2019; See et al., 2012; Alotaibi et al., 2019; Hajli et al., 2016; Jayadi et al., 2022). The accepted and rejected hypothesis above, add a new insight to current existing literature among Malaysian consumers, which hopefully provide support to future researchers.

On a practical implication side, online sellers may get the following conclusion: perceived trust and perceived ease of use are major elements that contribute to the Malaysian consumer's intention to make a purchase through the Instagram social commerce platform. On the other hand, perceived usefulness, perceived information quality, and gender have no effect on a consumer's inclination to purchase. The following suggestions are proposed for social retailers and marketers, hoping to be helpful in business and marketing practice. Online retailers may design advantageous business, sales, and marketing strategies based on this finding. Because consumers in Malaysia believe that the Instagram Shop feature is easy to use and that buying from the Instagram Shop is simple for them, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises should investigate incorporating this platform as part of their online selling platform. Consequently, to earn the trust of their customers, businesses should make certain that all of the information and content included on their Instagram Shop are accurate, and that none of the visual components present any kind of deception. In addition to this, retailers in socialcommerce platforms need to encourage customers to provide their feedback and review of items after making a purchase using such platforms. Customers will have more faith in merchants who can demonstrate the legitimacy of their online store and the items they offer ifthey take these steps.

In conclusion, this research adds theoretical support for a model of online consumers' purchase intentions among Instagram users in Malaysia. Furthermore, it lends credence to the idea that an online retailer needs to work toward enhancing Instagram users' ease of use and trust in the platform. Users of the Instagram Shop have the potential to become a lucrative market to cultivate after the company has developed more effective business and marketing strategies.

There are certain limitations to this study, even though the results were connected to thepurchase intention of Malaysian consumers using Instagram for social commerce. To begin, studies are conducted for people of various ages, ranging from 18 to 54 years old, with the bulk of respondents falling in the 25 to 34 age brackets. In addition to that, most of the respondents are female (82%). These demonstrate a restriction that exists within the set of respondents who were used in this study. Second, the findings are exclusive to Instagram and cannot be extrapolated to the variety of other online social commerce platforms. There are othersocial commerce platforms available in Malaysia, such as Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, and

YouTube, or future researchers can consider a general study of all social commerce platforms. Lastly, this research does not focus on a particular product or category, considering there are various products listed on social commerce platforms.

In light of the limitations of the study, it could be worthwhile to carry out further research using a bigger sample size and ensuring that there is a comparable number of respondents across all age ranges and genders. In addition to that, a subsequent study needs to take into consideration other social commerce platforms or conduct a more comprehensive research study that comprises all networking platforms. As a final point, the focus on product categories on social commerce platforms should also be taken into consideration in a future study.

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The two faces of the metaverse.

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The promise of digital technology is often portrayed through visual storytelling, with its narrative aimed at providing users with the vision that by embracing it they will gain control, speed, convenience, and freedom (Polyviou et al, 2021. P166). Bombastic visualisations of freedom are regularly articulated through advertisements and concepts for digital technology, to convince consumers that their lives can be enhanced and even liberated from the drudgery of daily routine. Depictions of unpredictable futuristic technology such as the metaverse are similar to many digital technologies before it, the metaverse has been pitched as providing its users with digital freedoms never previously experienced. These visions require scrutiny, as digital technology can be viewed as two-faced. On the one hand, it is predicted that it will provide its users with freedom and control but on the other, there is a concern, that as with existing technologies, vast amounts of investment will be directed at designing the metaverse to influence and control individuals' behaviour (Newport, 2019, 9).

During a keynote speech in October 2021, Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, ignited an interest in the future of the internet which he termed the metaverse. Whilst the metaverse was not a new concept (Bourlakis et al, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009), Zuckerberg piqued interest by describing it as an upgrade to the internet, a “platform and medium (that) will be even more immersive. An embodied internet where you are in the experience, not just looking at it” (Meta, 2021, 1). The words of the CEO of a giant in digital technology may be fated to be viewed with some degree of caution and scepticism. Zuckerberg’s presentation may have been an attempt to improve the perception of his company and change its direction (Kraus et al, 2022). Yet despite the well-publicised issues at Facebook, Google Trends data shows that searches on the term metaverse skyrocketed following Zuckerberg’s presentation (Google Trends, 2023), indicating that he had captured the imagination and that he had caused more than a ripple in the highly contested digital technology space.

Zuckerberg painted a utopian picture of where the metaverse would lead. He described a future where the drawbacks of current technology would be eliminated. Where individuals would gain presence even when physically distant from others. The metaverse would be a virtual place where individuals could look out over inspiring and beautiful views, providing the option to present their digital selves through an avatar in a multitude of different ways that suit personal preferences (Goffman, 1959). However, the presentation lacked detail. Zuckerberg promised that individuals would own their digital items, that digital safety and security would be built into the metaverse and that his aim was not to increase the amount of time people spent on screens but to make the experience better. At face value, the story told by Zuckerberg could be viewed as a rallying cry for digital emancipation. Yet other major technology companies, including Microsoft and Apple, are also investing in their own interpretations of the metaverse, also aiming to create alternative immersive experiences that enhance the feeling of presence. (Ignatius, 2021; Stein, 2023).

Conversely, science fiction writers often portray a different outcome. Their visions typically highlight turbulence at a societal level, describing dystopian futures where technology has enabled an alternate reality that significantly disadvantages large sections of society (Cline, 2011; Stephenson, 1992; Huxley, 1932). These are products of the author's imagination but in some ways no less fictional than the future visions portrayed by today's powerful technology companies to their customers.

This envisioning of a future digital state is described in the novel Snow Crash written by Neal Stephenson in 1992. Stephenson's work is well-cited for coining the term "metaverse" (Stephenson, 1992, 17). Whilst Stephenson does not define the metaverse in Snow Crash it has been defined as a "persistent virtual world that reached, interacted with, and affected nearly every part of human existence" (Ball, 2022, 3).

The digital world and visions of its future are to some extent realised because of writers such as Stephenson. Whilst Stephenson does not wish for his work to be taken too literally (Ball, 2022, 4), he paints a picture of a dystopian world moulded by inflation, technology billionaires and businesses that have adopted controlling practices. The world of Snow Crash is inhabited by a digital class within society that enjoys significant advantages due to its capability to access, build, and control the metaverse. Science fiction often becomes science fact and science fiction has been considered as a route to creating future products (Dean et al., 2017).

Thus, the opportunities for emancipation through the use of digital technologies represent opportunities. Yet for the metaverse to become a driver of digital emancipation, its dual faces of opportunity and threat, freedom and control, and the potential for a simultaneous utopia and dystopia require further exploration to ensure that individuals, managers, and organisations fully appreciate the duality of digital technology.

This early, work-in-progress research design aims to explore how works of fiction can be viewed as more than just a representation of the world but can also serve as an inspiration in the development of the future. Fiction can shine a light on phenomena that are hard to describe or relate to (Holt & Zundel, 2018) which is often the situation when considering futuristic technology. Works such as Snow Crash (Stephenson, 1992) and Ready Player One (Cline, 2011) provide their readers with detailed visions of what the metaverse might become by providing in-depth narrative representations of the anticipated key features of the technology. They also appear to be the inspiration for influencers at major technology companies (Michaud & Appio, 2022; Bezmailnovic, 2022). By considering the visions from fiction it is possible to explore the tensions, generate new ideas and create a richer understanding (Savage et al, 2018) of the way in which the metaverse will impact individuals, organisations and society in the future.

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The influence of augmented reality on brand experience, brand advocacy and purchase intentions.

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Keywords: *augmented reality, branding, consumer brand experience, mobile apps, brand advocacy, purchase intentions.*

Augmented reality (AR) is an emerging technology, and its use has increased to a great extent in the recent years, while various corporate house are finding new ways to implement this technology to enhance customer experience (Sung et al. 2022) AR is used to superimpose computer generated virtual objects onto a real life view of world around us. This technology helps consumers to visualise fitting the virtual objects in the real world (Tan et al. 2022).

Academia in the field of marketing and branding has focused on understanding the antecedents, mechanisms, and consequences of AR technology applications (for example: Rejeb et al., 2021; Zanger et al. 2022). This study aims to investigate the influence of AR on consumer brand experience, brand attitude, brand advocacy, and purchase intentions. The study also aims to examine the influence of consumer privacy as a contingency condition for the AR influence on consumer brand experience.

The technological developments in digital platforms have created a great potential for the marketing professionals to adopt new ways to create better value for the customers (Veile et al. 2022); and these technologies can reshape the consumer brand interaction (Wang, 2021). There is no dearth of literature about using the use of AR in the field of marketing, for example, AR and purchase intentions (Whang et al. 2021) AR and customer experience (Gatter et al. 2022); AR and retail marketing (Tan et al. 2022). However, it has been argued that there is a paucity of branding theory of AR, and researchers should investigate the ways AR technologies influence brand experience (Rauschnabel et al. 2019; Rejeb et al. 2021). AR usage in the marketing field is an emerging concept, and there is a need to further explore how marketing can get benefit from AR technology (Barhorst et al. 2021; Yin et al. 2021). This study aims to explore the role of AR with reference to consumer brand experience, brand attitude, and purchase intentions. Therefore, considering the past theories, this study aims to answer the five questions.

The first research question is What is the role of AR technology on the consumer brand experience? Brand experience is a relatively new and under-researched area, and its antecedents and consequences need further explanation (Zha et al. 2022). Studies have postulated that one of the main objectives of marketing is to enhance a greater brand experience (Coelho et al. 2020). Therefore, the study on hand uses the perceived usefulness of AR as an antecedent of consumer brand experience and proposes that the perceived usefulness of AR technology positively influences the customer brand experience.

The second research question is, to what extent the consumer brand experience influences the brand attitude? The study proposes that an overall positive brand experience leads to a positive brand attitude. It has been observed that a positive brand experience results in a positive influence on brand preference and brand attitude (Hwang et al. 2021; Nayeem et al. 2019). However, the brand experience may come from several consumer touch points (Schmitt, 2009). Whereas Wagner et al. (2020) particularly emphasised the importance of electronic channel touch points and argued that these touch points should be studied separately. Zarantonello & Schmitt (2013) highlighted that consumer brand experience positively influence brand attitude. However, the studies in the past used brand attitude as a one-dimensional construct, (e.g., Augusto & Torres, 2018; Chu & Chen 2019; Hwang et al. 2021). This study proposes to study the influence of brand experience on brand attitude; and uses three-dimensional brand attitude including brand love, brand trust, and brand addiction.

The third research question is, to what extent the brand attitude influences the behavioural outcomes of the consumers? Extant literature is available on the relationship between brand attitude influences the purchase intentions (e.g. Haryanto et al. 2022; Medina-Molina et al. 2021) and brand advocacy (Xie et al. 2019). It has been explained earlier that the study uses a multi-dimensional scale for brand attitude; therefore, the present study has an opportunity to go further to explain the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intentions and brand advocacy.

The fourth research question is, what is the role of consumer privacy concerns on the relationship between the perceived usefulness of AR and consumer brand experience? There is great excitement about using AR technology in marketing; however, there is a little concern about the privacy issues. This study proposes to explore, how privacy issues of consumers affect the relationship between the perceived usefulness of AR and brand experience (Harborth & Pape, 2021; Rauschnabel et al. 2018). Therefore, this study aims to address the issue of limited empirical evidence for the moderating effect of consumer privacy concerns as a contingency factor for the relationship between the perceived usefulness of AR and brand experience.

Based on the literature review the study proposes following research objectives:

1. The perceived usefulness of AR significantly influences on the consumer brand experiences
2. The perceived usefulness of AR significantly influences on the purchase intentions and brand advocacy.
3. The perceived usefulness of AR on the purchase intentions and brand advocacy mediated by the consumer brand experiences.
4. The consumer brand experiences have a significant influence on brand attitude.

Perceived usefulness of AR. Perceived usefulness is the extent to which a person thinks using a certain system would improve his or her capacity for work. This makes sense given that the definition of useful is "capable of being used advantageously." In an organisational setting, individuals are typically rewarded for excellent performance through increases, promotions, bonuses, and other incentives. A system whose perceived usefulness is high is one for which a user thinks there is a good use-performance relationship (Davis, 1989). Technology Acceptance Model, one of the most important models of technology acceptance. It has two components: the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of new technology. They are the two main elements influencing a person's intention to use it (Charness & Boot, 2016). This study is based on perceived usefulness of AR technology. Since, perceived usefulness of a technological system is frequently cited as a crucial factor in influencing how quickly new technologies are adopted (McLean & Wilson, 2019).

By using cutting-edge technologies like augmented reality (AR) apps, smart retail and mobile apps provide clients with a cutting-edge, atypical retail environment. These technological advancements foster innovation and raise the standard of living for consumers (Pantano & Timmermans, 2014). AR apps enable new experiences in retail settings by fusing the real world and the virtual world (Hilken et al., 2017). Additionally, mobile augmented reality (AR) apps improve customers' information-seeking and purchasing behaviours, which further simplifies their shopping experiences. Thus, mobile AR apps provide users with joyful experiences that are available 24/7 when they are "on-the-go," resulting in favourable behavioural and attitude changes (Park & Yoo, 2020). Thus, the perceived usefulness of augmented reality improves user perception and usage intention (Arghashi & Yuksel, 2022).

In the past Chung et al. (2015) have studied the perceived usefulness of AR in the tourism for destination attractiveness. Rese et al. (2014) studied the influence of perceived usefulness on behavioural intention to use. They had a limitation that they focused only one app and asked to explore other apps in future. Holdack et al. (2020) studied the role of perceived enjoyment and perceived informativeness in accepting the AR wearables. They found a positive influence of the mediating role of perceived enjoyment between perceived informativeness and, attitude and usage intention. Kowalczuk et al. (2021) studied the influence of AR characteristics on cognitive, affective and behaviour response through experiments using IKEA app. The author called for future research as the sample was based on college students only. Chuah et al. (2016) studied positive influence of perceived usefulness on formation of attitude. So, perceived usefulness of AR has been studied in the past with different outcomes. McLean and Wilson (2019) studied the influence of AR attributes on brand engagement. They asked for future research to explore AR related perception using experiments.

In technology acceptance model, which is explained above, external variables are incorporated termed as perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment. With regard to AR application perception about the information and enjoyment are two important factors (Rese et al. 2014). One-sided research on cognitive or emotional elements, according to academics, may fail to account for significant and valuable variations. Therefore, it is not sufficient to examine users' value perception from a purely utilitarian perspective, particularly for service products, where the hedonic nature of consumption may cause users to have a more favourable attitude or behavioural tendency toward the product (Yuan et al., 2022). In addition, perceived enjoyment (PE) and perceived information (Dedeoglu et al.) are considered as antecedents of perceived utility in studies on AR apps in the field of online shopping. Although there doesn't appear to be a direct relationship between PE and views or plans to use AR apps in online retail (Holdack et al. 2020). So, this study aims to investigate the perceived usefulness using dimensions hedonic and utilitarian components. In addition to this, it also adds sub-dimensions of hedonic and utilitarian value of AR. In a meta analysis Vieira et al. (2022) proposed that to study the multi-dimensional aspect of AR on customer experience. So, the study in hand aims to investigate multi-dimension influence of AR perceived usefulness by incorporating hedonic and utilitarian value.

Consumer Brand Experience. It is believed that a company's brand is a crucial intangible asset. From Aaker (1991) understanding of brand equity, study of brand personality (Aaker, 1997), studies on branding have undergone numerous changes. Exploring the emotional side of branding has become a focus of more recent developments in branding. Additionally, literature asserts that in addition to attitude, a consumer's behaviour is also influenced by their feelings about a brand (Joshi & Garg, 2021). The study of consumer behaviour has largely ignored augmented reality (AR), despite the fact that it is expected to play a significant role in the future. There is currently little data on how customers respond to this technology (Javornik, 2016). So, it is important to know the consumers emotions towards the brand.

Brand experience is defined as the sensations, emotions, thoughts, and actions that are sparked by brand-related stimuli found in a brand's packaging, communications, and settings (Brakus et al., 2009). In the minds of consumers, strong brand experiences can create important differentiating associations and mould views of distinctiveness in comparison to rival products. The reasoning behind this is that a pleasant brand experience awakens customers' senses and engages them through feelings, ideas, and sensations, eventually assisting in the reinforcement of brand-specific associations and memories (Dwivedi et al., 2018). The concept of experience is given by the work of Pine et al. (1999) in marketing. People frequently have a variety of experiences such as product experience (Hoch, 2002), customer experience (Gentile et al., 2007), shopping experience (Machleit & Eroglu, 2000) and, consumption experience (Richins, 1997). A brand can distinguish itself from rivals and achieve its objectives by creating great brand experiences (Kim, Shin, & Koo, 2018). The concept of brand experience was emerged in 1991 (Ortmeyer & Huber, 1991).

One of the notions that has emerged in consumer research over the past ten years with the most promise is brand experience. Contrary to other brand-related ideas, it has frequently been taken into account in consumer dynamics implicitly rather than overtly (Andreini et al., 2019).

Augmented reality helps businesses strengthen brand outcomes and enhance consumer experiences (Arghashi & Yuksel, 2022). Using AR technology, brands can show customers several angles of the goods and provide more detailed product information. One feature of augmented reality in a virtual try-on environment is its capacity to increase information, which aids in assuring customers of their decision. This ability to interact with the product helps in decision making to choose the product confidently (Romano et al., 2021).

There are different dimensions of brand experience has been studied in the past such as; sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual dimensions (Kumar & Kaushik, 2020), aesthetic, educational, entertaining, and escapist (Pine et al. 1999), sense, feel, think, act and relate (Schmitt, 1999), intrinsic and extrinsic value (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994). However, the focus of past studies was mostly on cognitive and affective dimensions (Ahn & Back, 2020; Kerem et al., 2001; McLean & Wilson, 2016; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014). Whereas experience is a multi-dimensional construct (Bapat, 2018; Bhattacharya et al., 2019; Kumar & Kaushik, 2020; Pine et al. 1999). The literature on multi-dimension of customer experience is not enough. In addition, Zha et al. (2020) claims that a careful assessment of its fundamental intellectual, that requires structure to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive conceptualization of the brand experience literature. Therefore, the study in hand advances the body of literature by incorporating affective, behavioural and relational dimensions of customer experience.

Brand Attitude. Consumer connections with the app usage experience may "spill over" to the brand once they are exposed to branded augmented reality material. For instance, if users criticize an app as "boring" or "poorly designed," these bad connections may harm the perception of the company as a whole. The opposite is true if users describe an app as "helpful," "enjoyable," and "well-designed," since these positive qualities might act as new associations and subsequently enhance general brand attitude (Rauschnabel et al., 2019).

In the past literature showed that after customers used their AR apps, the companies IKEA and Tunnel benefited from better brand attitudes (Rauschnabel et al. 2019). Another study found positive influence of online product presentation on forming the brand attitude. They called for future research to study the diverse sample (Smink, et al. 2019)

Consumer Response. The term "customers' response" relates to the many evaluations and results that consumers have when using AR technology. Based on novelty, users' perceptions, retailers' perspectives, and diverse platforms, AR's effects on consumers' reactions have been producing a range of results (Vieira et al. 2022). AR has positive and negative responses such as positive response includes usefulness (Rese, et al. 2014). Customers are more likely to have good behavioural intentions to attain the same values in the future if they receive positive hedonic value from the product they have liked. To put it another way, customers are more likely to stick with the same product in the future if it offers them a sense of freshness or provides them with emotional benefits like enjoyment (Dedeoglu et al. 2018).

Brands have more recently included augmented reality components to mobile applications to help with customer information search. Customers can now take a photo of a product on their smartphone and use that photo to search for a specific product within the mobile application thanks to new search by image features that online retailers ASOS and Amazon have added to their mobile applications. Customers can also add furniture from the virtual world to their view of the actual world using the IKEA mobile application. As a result, there is a rising need to comprehend how augmented reality affects consumer behaviour, its intended usage, and the experiences it provides (Javornik, 2016; McLean & Wilson, 2019).

Despite the expansion of the AR phenomenon, a fragmented collection of scholarly research has produced scant and contradictory proof of this technology's direct and indirect effects on consumer behaviour (Vieira et al. 2022). In addition, the available literature on AR has mainly focused on information processing view and how AR influences; willingness to personal data (Smink et al. 2019), purchase (Kowalczuk et al. 2021) , recommendation (Hilken et al. 2017), reuse intention, technology acceptance (Rese, Schreiber, & Baier, 2014), cognitive and affective response using AR (Kowalczuk et al. 2021), mental imagery (Hilken et al. 2017), interactivity and vividness on consumer response (Yim et al., 2017), Continued usage intention (Hsu et al. 2021; Kim et al. 2016). So, a large number of studies have investigated influence of AR on consumer response.

There are two effects of perceived usefulness. One has a direct impact on the intention to continue, whereas the other has an indirect impact due to satisfaction (Kim et al. 2016). This study focuses on brand advocacy and purchase intentions, which are particularly crucial for retailers to produce subsequent conversions and profits in the pre-purchase stage.

Research Design &Methodology. This study uses a pragmatist paradigm to test the proposed model. To achieve this, two different studies will be conducted. This study mainly takes an empiricist stance; however, it has some interpretivist assumptions too. Therefore, an exploratory sequential design will be approached. In the first phase of the study, a qualitative methodology will be conducted to understand the perceived usefulness of AR. Based upon the qualitative study, scale items for the perceived usefulness of AR will be developed. Once the scale items are developed, these items will be used to rate various AR mobile apps based on their features i.e. hedonic and utilitarian value of AR. In the third stage, the results will be applied to a relatively larger sample, to test the model using a quantitative technique draw conclusions for the generalisations of the results.

By looking into the literature, this study put forwarded three subdimensions for each of the two dimensions of perceived usefulness of AR i.e. hedonic and utilitarian value of AR. In the first stage, this study uses qualitative methodology to develop scale items for the subdimensions of the hedonic and utilitarian value of AR. This study will use semi-structured interviews, to develop better insights into the factors that help determine the perceived usefulness of AR. This process will help develop the scale for the variable under study. To perform this process, the protocol devised by Churchill, (1979) and Rossiter (2002) will be used. Exploratory Factor Analysis will be used for the data reduction, and the items with greater predictability will be used for measuring the subdimensions of the hedonic and utilitarian value of AR.

Phase two of the research uses by a structured questionnaire survey. The objective of this part of the study is to test the proposed framework. The respondents will experience the mobile apps related to hospitality and tourism sector and they will be given a structured questionnaire. To perform this task, there are two options. Firstly, develop two mobile apps with varying degrees of the hedonic and utilitarian value of AR. The second option is to use existing apps designed by various companies. Using the first option may be beyond the limits of this study. Because creating a professional AR app requires a large budget and time for developing and testing. There is one limitation of using existing applications. Since the present study seeks to explore the influence of AR on the consumer brand experience. While experiencing the applications, the respondents may have pre-existing biases toward the brands, and it may invalidate the results. To avoid this, it is proposed that the study can be conducted in a geographic place, where these brands do not exist.

The data collected through the structured questionnaires will be cleaned and analysed using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) technique. To do this, initially, a confirmatory factor analysis will be performed to assess the reliability and validity of the data. A second-order measurement model will be used to assess the convergent and discriminant validity. A structural model will be performed to test the hypothesis. To test the mediating influence of consumer brand experience on the brand purchase intentions and brand advocacy will be tested by assessing direct and indirect effects in the model. To perform the analysis, AMOS will be used.

Theoretical contributions. In general terms, this study will contribute to the branding literature by adding to the emerging field of AR technology usage in marketing. Since marketing literature has contributed to the new technologies and their influence on the consumers, especially AR and VR. The research studies took an oversimplistic view of AR influence and explain the influence of AR through two dimensions (Sung, 2021; Yim et al. 2017), while Barhorst, et al. (2021) used three dimensions. According to Yin et al. (2021), the AR technologies and their use are still in their “infancy” stage and there is a need to further develop this concept and its applications in marketing. AR reality was used in research and practice as a function of enjoyment (e.g., Yim et al. 2017; Zanger et al. 2022). This study refers to it as the hedonic value, while the utilitarian part of the AR is mostly ignored. The study on hand takes a further step and aims to explain the hedonic and utilitarian value of AR by decomposing these variables into subdimensions. It will help the marketer to better understand what factors influence more in shaping the perceived usefulness of AR. Through this, the AR designing companies can create content that will contribute more to enhancing the brand experience.

Furthermore, this study will add to the marketing literature by exploring the effect of consumer brand experience on brand advocacy and purchase intentions. Tan et al. (2022) studied the direct influence of AR technology on sales with product characteristics as mediators. However, a number of studies argued that the influence of AR on purchase intentions should be studied through a mediating mechanism (e.g. Martínez-Molés et al. 2021; Sung, 2021). This study uses consumer brand experience as a mediating variable between the perceived usefulness of AR and purchase intentions.

Finally, this study added to the emerging issue of consumer privacy concerns in an online environment, particularly with respect to AR. That poses a potential risk in using AR applications. Several studies have emphasised consumer privacy concerns in the online environment (e.g. Tajvidi et al. 2020). The present study adds to the marketing literature by using consumer privacy concerns as a moderating variable in the relationship between the perceived usefulness of AR and consumer brand experience.

Like any other research, the present study has contributions to the marketing practice in two ways. Enhancing consumer brand experience is key to marketers. They aim to explore innovative means to enhance consumer brand experience. In recent times, the use of AR technology has increased. However, the main focus of such applications is mostly for fun and enjoyment. The present study opens the avenues for using AR technology in marketing to increase the utilitarian value of the customers. Since the study aims to explore the relative strength of AR dimensions on the brand experience. The results may enable the marketing managers to optimise the fun and the utilitarian part while offering AR applications to their consumers for a richer brand experience.

In spite of the fact that AR technology, particularly face filters gather and share a greater amount of personal information, for example, biometrics of face. The use of AR filters and applications is getting more popular (Snap Inc. & Deloitte Digital, 2021). And the marketing practice has to create a trade-off between, "risk and reward". The study on hand may help marketing practice to evaluate what to offer to the consumers to access personal information without hurting the consumer brand experience.

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Track

Marketing lasting impact

Session Chair: Professor Stan Maklan

Marketing and marketing communications - developing benificence or discordant babel?

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Marketing appears to be vibrant in all markets and nations and firmly embedded in one form or another in the private and public sector. Yet, is an artefact. i.e., a constructive way to do business and legitimised and justified in the 20th century. Despite kudos and criticism, it has been legitimised by adoption everywhere. Accompanying the rise of marketing is a growing cacophony of marketing and corporate communication of all kinds. When and where it will peak, no-one knows. However, from a consumer perspective, we now live in a world where it is difficult if not impossible to avoid such communications.

If we take a political example: Governments, state institutions, and politicians of all shades and parties of all hues seem to embrace marketing in all its forms. For example, from 1991, governments of the collapsed economies of the failed communist experiment (the ex-Comecon countries controlled by the Soviet Union), not only embraced democratic institutions, but also 'market economies' and with these - albeit with caveats - the marketing discipline and its communicative processes. Within a very few years, ex-USSR nations were joined by 'Red' China who also turned to marketing for its businesses and peoples, while retaining central political command and control. Coase and Wang (2013), for example, noted in their report, that China became a market economy by the end of the 1990's before it joined the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Moreover, it has moved significantly to become more integrated with the global economy (Kitchen, 2003a; 2013, 2017; Kitchen and Tourky, 2022).

Marketing is deeply rooted in most societies. It is contemporaneous. It is relevant. It is national, international and global. Despite caveats, it is applicable to millions of businesses and a rapidly expanding global population (11 billion people by 2100, 9.7billion by 2050, and eclipsed 8billion on 15 November 2022). Yet, when the essence of Marketing was distilled and ultimately enshrined as a consumer orientation, in 1950, the entire population of earth was a mere 2.5billion. Is marketing now fit for purpose? Does marketing communication add to/augment/or benefit the human race?

Marketing has become the main connection between businesses and organisations of all types and sizes and their customers and consumers, and marketing communications is the delivery and persuasive mechanism with the corporate varieties apparently fulfilling a more informative function. For example, customers and consumers around the world are informed ad nauseum that marketing is *in their interest*, seeks to *fulfil their* needs, and changes are invariably presented in a way that are *supposedly beneficial to target audiences (*see Kitchen, 2003a, 2003b; 2017; Kitchen and Sheth, 2016). But, all these goals, intentions and positively oriented statements about marketing perse, may not be perceived in the same way by markets.

Certainly, it appears evident that much of marketing communications can be seen as banal, uninteresting, and repetitive despite its omnipresence.

In 2023, misgivings about marketing and communications abound. Just in one small example, it seems evident that many organisations (business or otherwise) do not adopt a customer or consumer orientation. In the political sphere, democracy in many countries does not appear to represent stakeholder/voters opinions, views or wants. In the business sphere, complaints about marketing continue to amass. Does marketing really satisfy needs? Is it an orientation in favour of consumers? Does communication via marketing and its related promises really deliver perceived benefits, or is it just a mechanism, or series of mechanism, to stimulate sales?

The 'problems' are manifest in many ways –

> '…. difficulties in consumer being able to contact organisations save by labyrinthine methods; a [perceived] disinterest and disinclination by businesses to treat consumers with respect; products that do not deliver proclaimed benefits and perhaps are incapable of so doing; services that do not match expectations; and products that while they satisfy needs also damage consumers and the environment. And, despite the advent of customer services in many organisations, these – at times – seem purposely designed to keep customers away from influencing businesses and/or their marketing processes in any way as evidenced by the rising popularity of consumer watchdog programs' (see Kitchen, 2013; Taylor et al 2020).

In the presentation, examples of recent and current practice will be presented illustrating both success and failure. Success, in that market share is expanded and sales increased. Failure in the sense that products and services fail to deliver promised benefits. And, sometimes sums expanded are perceived to be exorbitant in relation to wastage of precious resources which could perhaps be used more ably elsewhere.

This paper will present, and discuss both sides of the argument, drawing upon illustrative material taken from marketing communications. Is marketing (and its communicative dominance) a blessing or a curse to mankind? We shall see.

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Agile integrated communication – A content- based approach.

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Organizations are embedded in increasingly complex environments, challenging the way they operate and communicate. Digitalization along with the fragmentation, or even atomization, of the previously mass-media-dominated public sphere have caused a constant flow of information and pervasive noise from competing messages due to the advent of social media and user-generated content (Seiffert-Brockmann & Einwiller, 2021; Torp, 2009). At the same time, organizations feel pressure from critical and inquisitive stakeholders, who demand more accountability and transparency from them (Christensen, Firat, & Cornelissen, 2009), while stakeholders' attention spans are shrinking. These circumstances have made it difficult for companies to reach the overall goals of their strategic communication efforts, thus calling for changes in how strategic communication is conceived and organized.

A concept that has been discussed as a way to address these challenges is integrated communication. Integrated communication involves the coordination of communication messages, channels, publics, and results (Kliatchko, 2008; Zvobgo & Melewar, 2011), as well as the alignment of symbols, messages, procedures, and behaviors, thus allowing organizations to communicate with clarity, consistency, and continuity (Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008). Integration is a critical component of strategic communication (Smith, 2013), since strategic communication prescribes efforts to meet set overall goals through deliberate communication activities, which include "coordinating and integrating the communication activities of organizations" (Holtzhausen, 2008, p. 2). While the literature on integrated communication (and integrated marketing communication) has been dominated by a primarily functional perspective emphasizing planning, prediction, and control (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006), scholars have argued in favor of a more flexible and "agile" approach to integration instead (Christensen et al., 2008).

In this paper, we present a framework of integrated communication that is rooted in the core idea of communicating with consistency and clarity through integrated message content while allowing for maximum flexibility to achieve agility. Before outlining our approach, which is derived from extant literature and, notably, empirical research in 13 organizations in Austria and Germany, we review the changing environment for strategic communication that companies are facing today and the different approaches and findings in the domain of integrated communication.

Changing environment for strategic communication of organizations. Throughout history, emerging new media have always posed challenges to organizations (Lubrano, 1997). That is true for the printing press, which fueled the age of reformation, as much as for the internet—and social media, subsequently—which upended the social world on an unprecedented scale since its invention in the 1980s. With every innovation, media have pushed deeper into human societies, increasingly mediatizing them up until the point where media have become a total phenomenon: Today, media permeate every aspect of day-to-day life (Saxer, 2012). By now, it is a truism to state that the internet and information and communication technologies (ICT) have fundamentally changed how people perceive the world in which they live. Luhmann (2017) once noted that almost everything that is known about the world was learned from the media, referring to traditional mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television that served as gatekeepers and mediators of information and opinion for most of the 20th century. Nowadays, media still fulfill that role to a certain degree (Schudson, 2018). However, while traditional mass media used to dominate the public sphere and its conversations, the internet penetrated the barrier that separated organizations and individuals from public arenas, dissolving it in the process.

The change that came with the development of the internet and ICT encompasses a wide range of processes that came to characterize the challenges for organizations in the information society of the 21st century. Bennett and Lemoine (2014) termed this new environment the VUCA world, describing a world that is dominated by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. One might add even more phenomena such as fragmentation, digitalization, diversity, and acceleration. All these phenomena interact with each other, influence the information process and its organizational management, and give rise to what Castells (2000) termed the network society. To stem this new tide of information and communication in the VUCA world, organizations needed to adapt to this new situation. As Andrew Gollner observed in the 1980s in his annual lecture for the Public Relations Society of America:

“The processes of industrialization and technology are relentlessly reducing the capacity of organizations (...) to remain islands unto themselves. Whether (...) it is a

corporation trying to increase its profits or enter into new markets, external hands seem to weigh increasingly heavily upon the steering mechanisms of most of our major institutions. In this new environment, corporate or any other organizational decision-making is more and more externally driven.” (Gollner, 1984, p. 4)

Gollner, a professor of political science, could not have foreseen the impact of ICT in the decades to come; yet, his assessment is spot on. All these changes and external influences, according to Gollner, amount to a challenge of interdependent existence. More and more organizations are dependent on others to survive, and managing these interdependencies has become the pinnacle of strategic (communication) management.

It is helpful to look at these changes and challenges in the organizational environment from a macro, meso, and micro level perspective of society, even though they penetrate all layers simultaneously and interact with each other across these layers. On the societal macro level, the greatest challenge is perhaps the fracture and fragmentation of the public sphere, with the simultaneous advent of the journalism crisis (Blumler, 2010). Since the ascent of social media—and microblogging and internet relay chats prior to that—news media have lost most of their dominance over the public sphere. In addition, mobile communication enables people to communicate with each other and form publics anywhere and anytime (Kim & Grunig, 2011). For most of the 20th century, media relations were at the center of public relations and corporate communication to foster credibility, trust, and organizational legitimacy in the public; therefore, relationships with journalists were of paramount importance. With external voices now flooding into and around the organization, authored by potentially everyone, organizations must reorient themselves towards content-generating users and creators of this new public sphere (Castells, 2008). They need to deal with a "pervasive din from competing messages, fragmented media images, the diminishing impact of advertising and the expectation of, and demand for, trustworthiness and transparency" (Torp, 2009, p. 195). To heed this call, organizational communicators began to increasingly rely on owned media in addition to their existing mix of earned and paid media (Stephen & Galak, 2012), thereby contributing to the change of the public sphere.

On the meso-level, this has major ramifications for the operations of organizations. What is true for society as a whole is also true for the organizations themselves, which are undergoing fundamental changes caused by digitalization and ICT. The simultaneity, speed, fragmentation, and intensity of communication with which organizations are being bombarded challenge organizational structures and processes. Departmental silos, parallel

communication procedures, separated communication budgets, and dispersed responsibilities for communication leave organizations ill equipped to face critical and inquisitive stakeholders placing pressure on them to disclose their strategic choices, corporate plans, and business practices (Christensen et al., 2009).

Ultimately, it is the micro level that poses the biggest challenge—both inside and outside the organization. Rising complexity (and how to cope with it) has always been a problem for organizations and their communication management teams but also the solution, as "the communication manager's apparatus [i.e., the organizational structures and processes of communication management] has to be, in itself, sufficiently complex to process, digest, accommodate, and understand, the environment's complexity" (Nothhaft & Wehmeier, 2007, p. 163). It was relatively easy for organizations to mirror the stakeholder structure (Freeman, 1984) and thereby cope with complexity by increasing organizational complexity. The apparatus of communication managers became compartmentalized into media relations, investor relations, public affairs, and marketing communication (and many more), structured along communication channels and issues like corporate social responsibility, reputation, sustainability, diversity, etc. However, the fragmentation, if not atomization, of the public sphere (Marcinkowski, 2015) has yet again upped the ante for organizations, who now face uncountable individual communicators across social media. Those individuals mostly speak for themselves, even though organizations try to fit them into stakeholder categories. Monitoring, listening, and responding (Macnamara, 2020) to them is imperative but almost impossible. More and more organizations rely on these individuals not merely as recipients of strategic communication but also as a source for topics and content; thus, inside-out content communication is complemented by outside-in communication. The communication with tangible individuals (micro) is slowly displacing communication with abstract stakeholder groups (meso) while the public sphere (macro) as a whole seems to fade in the back mirror.

All these changes amount to a more fractured, diversified, interconnected, and ephemeral communication landscape that organizations need to navigate in order to foster and maintain organization-public relationships (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). Integrated communication has been discussed as an approach to deal with the challenges caused by the changing corporate environment. However, there are different perspectives and approaches on how integrated communication can meet the challenges posed by a VUCA world.

Conceptualization and dimensions of integration. Christensen et al. (2008) defined integrated communication as “the notion and practice of aligning symbols, messages, procedures and behaviours in order for an organisation to communicate with clarity, consistency and continuity within and across formal organisational boundaries” (p. 424). Several scholars have argued that clarity, consistency, and continuity in an organization’s communication is necessary to stand out in a cluttered marketplace (e.g., Knox & Bickerton, 2003), and that consistency between what the organization communicates and how it behaves underlies their legitimacy in a globalized world (e.g., Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; Schultz & Kitchen, 2000). The concept of integrated communication—often termed integrated marketing communication (IMC) in marketing—has evolved from a narrow “one look, one voice” (Duncan, 1993) concept that conceives integration mainly as a means for ensuring that an organization’s communications messages are clear and coherent (e.g., Duncan & Everett, 1993; Low, 2000) to a broader organization-wide approach (e.g., Eagle & Kitchen, 2000; Schultz & Schultz, 2003). Following this broader approach, Porcu, Barrio-García, and Kitchen (2017) developed a framework and measurement scale of integrated communication, which they defined as “[t]he stakeholder-centred interactive process of cross-functional planning and alignment of organisational, analytical and communication processes that allows for the possibility of continuous dialogue by conveying consistent and transparent messages via all media to foster long-term profitable relationships that create value” (p. 694). The framework comprises four dimensions: 1) message consistency, 2) interactivity, 3) stakeholder-centered strategic focus, and 4) organizational alignment.

Message consistency is the most basic level of integration, referring to the communication of coherent and clear positioning. While consistency does not mean that the communicated messages must be identical, they must be non-contradictory and complement each other (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Duncan and Moriarty (1998, p. 6) emphasized the importance to deliver and receive messages on a platform of “strategic consistency,” which they conceptualized as the consistency in the way corporate values are presented, how the products perform, and how the brand is identified and positioned. Focusing on an organization’s values as the core element of integration, van Riel (1995) proposed the concept of common starting points (CSPs), which “could be considered as central values which function as the basis for undertaking any kinds of communication envisaged by an organization” (p. 19). By adopting this CSP approach, organizations aim for consistency in the values that underly communication and all expressions of their corporate identity. Based on van Riel’s CSP approach, Motion and Leitch (2002) additionally proposed the concepts of “multiple identity enactments,” referring to the variations in multiple interactions between an organization and its stakeholders, and “common end points” (CEPs), which represent the goals the organization has set for itself. As such, organizations can handle their desire for consistency by taking account of the multiplicity of meanings that are actually produced by the organization (Motion & Leitch, 2002).

Interactivity is a core aspect of integration (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). It is “the element *sine qua non* that establishes a two-way symmetrical communication” (Porcu et al., 2017a, p. 697), which is essential for dialogue between an organization and its stakeholders. Digitalization and the advent of social media have opened up a plethora of opportunities for organizations to directly communicate with their stakeholders on digital platforms and for the latter to communicate with one another. Where journalists previously occupied the role as gatekeeper between organizations and their stakeholders, the intermediary role of journalism has become less and less important (Fletcher, Hermida, Korell, & Logan, 2012; Avery, Lariscy, & Sweetser, 2010). Digital media have given individuals as well as organizations the ability to become publishers themselves (Capozzi & Berlin Zipfel, 2011). Organizations produce their own media to disseminate content for their target audiences, which can, in turn, stimulate user-generated content and, thus, interactivity. These target audiences are active communicators and creative partners in the process of creating meaning and experiences. Thus, organizations must develop a tolerance for meanings that are negotiated together with and among their stakeholders and "develop the knack to be playful, interact and engage in co- construction of communicated meanings" (Christensen, Torp, & Firat, 2005, p. 165).

The *stakeholder-centered strategic focus* dimension of integration "reflects the need for the whole organization to acknowledge that its main strategic goal should be to create added value for its stakeholders so as to establish and maintain long-term relationships with them" (Porcu, Barrio-García, Alcántara-Pilar, & Crespo-Almendros, 2017, p. 126). To create value for all stakeholders, their interests, needs, concerns, etc., must be known, which requires active corporate listening (Macnamara, 2020). This also helps when re-evaluating CSPs on a constant basis to ensure that they are still relevant not only for the organization but also for its stakeholders (Motion & Leitch, 2002). Macnamara cited several studies that identified the benefits of active listening like customer satisfaction (Bentley, 2010) and public trust (Yang, Kang, & Cha, 2015); he showed in his own research that listening actively and effectively to customers, employees, and other stakeholders generates opportunities and can have significant financial as well as cultural benefits for organizations. All information gathered concerning stakeholders must then flow and be shared among all the functions and agents that deal with stakeholder interests and relationship management inside and outside the organization (Porcu et al., 2017a).

The dimension of organizational alignment refers to the vertical as well as horizontal integration at the organizational level (Porcu et al., 2017a). While earlier concepts of integrated communication mainly focused on the consistency of messages, the challenges regarding the implementation of integrated communication programs raised awareness of the organizational dimension of integration (e.g., Eagle & Kitchen, 2000; Gulati, 2007; Schultz & Schultz, 2003). It became clear that too much rigidity in organizational structures hampers integration (e.g., Gulati, 2007; Schultz & Schultz, 2003). Rigid organizational structures that propagate "command and control" were found to work as "strait-jackets": "no movement, no change, no chance for integration" (Schultz, 1999, p. 8). A lack of horizontal communication between "functional silos" was also identified as a prevalent problem (Gronstedt, 1996, 2000). The silos arise because different functions, such as advertising, sales promotions, and public relations, generally address distinct audiences and apply different operational practices. Gronstedt (2000) accentuated the value not only of formal but also of informal horizontal communication structures to foster openness, innovation, and learning (see also Smith, 2013). Aside from the alignment of horizontal and vertical communication processes, Porcu et al. (2017a) considered cross-functional coordination and collaboration and the sharing of corporate values and goals among managers and employees as part of organizational alignment.

Organizational approaches to integration: From functional to flexible. As emphasized above, the organizational dimension is a core element of integration. Smith (2013) noted that most of the organizational approaches to integration take a primarily functional perspective, emphasizing planning, prediction, and control (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Christensen et al. (2005, 2008) questioned whether an organizational approach to integration, which focuses on control, regulation, and centralization, is sophisticated enough to identify, manage, and adapt to the continuous changes in the organizational environments and to exhibit adequate flexibility and responsiveness in a VUCA world. Referring to Ashby's "law of requisite variety" (Ashby, 1958; Conant & Ashby, 1970), they argued that the internal variety of a controlling system (e.g., the organizational processes of handling and exchanging information) must be at least as great as the complexity of the environment to be controlled. Since today's environments are coined by turbulence, ambiguity, and diversity, internal variety must be up to par (see also

Nothhaft & Wehmeier, 2007). Christensen et al. (2008) pointed out several problems that a functional approach to integrated communication, which they referred to as a "*tightly coupled system*" (p. 431), entails, such as its limited flexibility. Drawing on Weick and colleagues (Weick, 1976; Orton & Weick, 1990), they argued that since a tightly coupled system reacts in its entirety to changes or perturbations in a certain part, it does not allow for autonomous interactions and responsiveness at the level of the organization's subunits. This implies rigidity and hinders an organization's subunits to individually respond to inputs from their environments.

Similarly, Smith (2013) noted that a functional approach does not pay adequate attention to the "internal factors that influence integration and lead to variations between organizational programs" (p. 66). He argued in favor of managerial directives that allow for flexibility while balancing control with trust and interpretative freedom of practitioners. Empirical research supports the importance of flexibility and collaboration. Drawing on the competing values framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 1999), Porcu and colleagues (Porcu et al., 2017b; Porcu, Barrio-García, Kitchen, & Tourky, 2020) established the role of organizational culture as a key antecedent of integrated communication. They showed that integration flourishes best in a collaborative culture, which is characterized by supportive leadership and a strong focus on collaborative behaviors among employees and between different departments (Porcu et al., 2020), and in an adhocracy culture, which emphasizes flexibility and is primarily focused on adaptability and creativity (Porcu et al., 2017b).

Christensen and colleagues (2008) proposed a *flexible integration approach* that balances control with flexibility and centralization with decentralization to address the shortcomings perceived in the traditional concepts of organizing integrated communication. The primary purpose of this approach is to attain organizational responsiveness through sensitivity to environmental complexity. Therefore, organizations must first become "*sophisticated observers*" (p. 436). This can be achieved by employees, also those outside the communications and marketing departments, acting as boundary spanners. These boundary spanners are to perceive subtle variations, take in diverse inputs, and confront the organization with alternative ideas and understandings. Such an organization-wide openness to diverse inputs from employees and external stakeholders requires rich horizontal as well as vertical exchanges, which are assumed to work better when hierarchies are flattened (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001) and structures are decentralized (Christensen et al., 2008). This, according to Christensen et al. (2008), implies a notion of *endogenous and organic forms of control*, where employees have a high degree of autonomy. This understanding of control promotes the formation of small organizational units like self-managing work teams, which are tightly integrated through intense communication and mutual commitments but more loosely coupled to other units in the organization.

To balance integration and flexibility, Christensen et al. (2008) further drew on van Riel's (1995, 2003) CSP concept and its extension by CEPs (Motion & Leitch, 2002), which was introduced above. Referring to the conception of tight and loose couplings (Glassman, 1973), Christensen et al. (2008) considered the CSP-driven organization to be tightly coupled to its core values but more loosely coupled between the different organizational units. They acknowledged that "some common starting points and end points are indispensable before the members can be turned loose to enact their autonomy," (p. 439) and that some level of centralization needs to precede a decentralized structure, yet they lamented that existing approaches overemphasize the role of managers to oversee and control the adherence to CSPs. Instead, they propagated a mixed structure of horizontal and vertical communication, whereby the vertical communication must also flow upwards from subunits to management. They recommended, in particular, to more actively integrate the organization's rank-and-file members and give them the freedom to span traditional boundaries and experiment with alternative ideas and solutions. While these departures need to be justified, they help the organization's values, goals, and practices to stay aligned with changes in the environments. In addition to CSPs and CEPs, Christensen et al. (2008) introduced the concept of "common process rules" (CPRs) that provide guidance for employees in the process of exploring new ideas and solutions. The CPRs help respect the vertical integration projects while allowing them to develop and change over time. The aim, as well as the challenge, of the flexible approach is to enable the distinct units in the organization "to voluntarily, consciously and consistently coordinate their communication efforts without constant overview and impositions from the 'centre' [by constructing] processes that diffuse the spirit and the capabilities of coordination and integration across all organs of the organization" (p. 441). Similarly, Smith (2012) emphasized the "spirit" of integration, which comprises the contextual variables of integration, including an open communication system, shared values, and a culture that fosters collaboration, social interaction, accountability, and flexibility.

The flexible integration approach as proposed by Christensen et al. (2008) is a call for the practice of integrated communication to become more agile. Flexibility, responsiveness, integration, and a culture of change are all global characteristics of the concept of agility (Sherehiy, Karwowski, & Layer, 2007), which is defined as follows:

"Agility is the overall capability of an organization to respond to and take advantage of the changes initiated by the drivers in the internal and external environment. It includes the ability to identify relevant changes and to respond proactively, efficiently, and effectively, employing the right personnel based on competence, not hierarchical status." (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021, p. 95)

Agility requires flattened hierarchies and decision-making structures, which goes along with a cultural shift from controlling to enabling (Denning, 2015). This leads to more uncontrolled communication at the horizontal level (van Ruler, 2015, 2018), which enhances the internal complexity to ultimately reach the complexity of the external environment (Conant & Ashby, 1970; Nothhaft & Wehmeier, 2007). In the next section, we introduce a framework of integration, which assumes the communication content to be the focal element while considering organizational agility as a necessary condition of organizational alignment.

Agile integration: A content-based approach. The framework of *content-based agile integration* is derived from prior conceptualizations of agility and integrated communication and, notably, from empirical research in 13 large companies in Germany and Austria, where we conducted 33 problem- centered interviews with communication professionals in 2018 and 2019 (Ninova-Solovykh, Seiffert-Brockmann, Einwiller, Wolfgruber, & Berger, 2019; Seiffert-Brockmann, Einwiller, Ninova-Solovykh, & Wolfgruber, 2021). Thus, we rely on practice theory as a lens to study and analyze integrated communication practices and to theorize practices of integrated communication (see also Ots & Nyilasy, 2017). A practice theory approach is meaningful because integrated communication is not something companies "adopt" or are "given," but rather, "it is recurrently produced in the everyday activities of practitioners" (Ots & Nyilasy, 2017, p. 493). The empirical research was part of a larger project on corporate communication in agile organizations with a focus on how companies manage communication content and messages.

The research revealed that practitioners are fully aware of the challenges emerging from digitalization, globalization, and the changes in the media landscape and public sphere outlined above. In everyday practice, practitioners experience a constant flow of information, a plummet in reaction times, and demanding stakeholders. Nevertheless, they also see opportunities that are derived from new ways of directly communicating with their audiences via owned and social media. This, however, forces them to think and work more like media producers in order to offer engaging content, which needs to be well aligned with the interests of both the stakeholders and the organization. Thereby, message consistency, or alignment, is considered to be an important objective. Aside from challenges that emerge from the external environment, practitioners have also observed internal challenges that need to be addressed. These are seen in a lack of flexibility and agile management, such as departmental silos, tight hierarchies, dispersed responsibilities for communication, and parallel communication procedures. Therefore, companies are working on changing their organizational structures and processes to become more agile in order to produce engaging and well-aligned content to foster their relationships and interactivity with stakeholders. The change towards more agility is also often driven by the need for more efficiency due to limited resources (Dühring & Zerfaß, 2021). In our research, we gained insights into these change processes, which reveal important implications for the concept of integrated communication.

The framework of content-based agile integration comprises two main dimensions: 1) *alignment of content* and 2) *alignment of organization*. The agile organizational alignment provides the foundation or context in which the alignment of communication content and messages can flourish. Similarly, Smith (2012, p. 606) differentiated between the integration "mechanics," which comprise variables like media and message coordination and the "spirit" of integration, i.e., contextual variables like an open communication system and a culture that prioritizes collaboration, social interaction, accountability, and flexibility. Drawing on the definitions of integrated communication by Christensen et al. (2008) and Porcu et al. (2017a), we define content-based agile integration as follows:

Content-based agile integration comprises the alignment of communication content and organizational structures and processes in order for an organization to communicate consistently via all media and establish enduring stakeholder relations that create value.

Alignment of content. Companies are social systems whose complexities are difficult for the human brain to grasp. People have ideas about what it means to manufacture products, work on assembly lines, and conclude contracts, but the organization as a system itself remains abstract, since the totality of all its operations is impossible for individuals to grasp and bring into a coherent context. It is through communication content that stakeholders become interested in, understand, and relate to an organization. Kliatchko (2008) emphasized the role of content in his definition of integrated marketing communication as an "audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs" (p. 140). He stressed that "content is the very impetus that induces persuasion in communication, and in turn causes behavioural effects on the target audience" (p. 140).

In the content-based approach of agile integration, content is the basis of all communication efforts, whereas the channels or media are handled as a secondary priority. A set of *core themes* serve as common starting points, i.e., as the basis of any kind of communication. Unlike in van Riel's (1995) CSP approach, it is not the central values of the organization that serve as CSPs but the core themes. Yet, the organization's values are an important source from which the themes are derived. Our research shows that organizational strategy as well as organizational values are the most important sources for the identification of relevant core themes (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021). Thus, the core themes are very much a product of an inside-out approach. To ensure relevance for the stakeholders and to stay attuned to the external environment, this procedure must be complemented by an outside-in approach by applying corporate listening and active monitoring (Macnamara, 2016). Taking Siemens as an example, the company's core themes include sustainability, cyber security, and mobility (https://www.siemens.com/us/en.html). This example further shows that core themes can slightly vary between regions, depending on the relevance for the stakeholders. Corporate history, for example, is a core theme communicated to German but not U.S. audiences (https://www.siemens.com/de/de.html, https://www.siemens.com/us/en.html), because the history of the company, which was founded in Germany, is more likely to interest German stakeholders.

Starting with the core themes as CSPs, strategic communication management then develops themed hierarchies, where the core themes are broken down into *sub-themes* that specify aspects of the overarching core theme and make it more concrete and relatable for the respective stakeholders. Examples for sub-themes of mobility, one of Siemens' core themes, are eMobility, railways, and intermodal solutions. While the core themes have a medium to long-term durability, sub-themes can have short-term relevance, as well. Furthermore, corporate listening and monitoring must be continuously employed to assess the relevance and topicality of themes. Employees with direct stakeholder contact play an essential role in the listening process, as they are the ones with a direct ear on the markets. As suggested by Christensen et al. (2008) and explained above, rank-and-file members of the organization need to be empowered to bring in their experiences and ideas. Employees should be given the freedom to span traditional boundaries, experiment with alternative ideas and solutions (Christensen et al., 2008), and develop the sub-themes founded in the organization's core themes based on their experiences. This also requires interaction and knowledge exchange not only within communication functions but also with colleagues inside and outside the organization.

The themes provide the foundation for deriving communication content and translating them into narratives and *stories,* which are used in communication measures and campaigns. All organizations in our research recognize the importance of narrating content in stories. *Storytelling* is unique to humans and present in every human society (Brown, 1991). Bietti, Tilston, and Bangerter (2019) regarded storytelling from an evolutionary perspective as adaptive collective sensemaking, which helps with "maintaining social bonds or group-level cooperation" (p. 710). Storytelling is an important means to provide the social glue that makes communities stick together beyond the kinship ties of its members (Dunbar, 1998), thus enabling the creation of what Anderson (2016) termed "imagined communities." As Freeman (2015) argued, "there can be no home, no place in the world, without the kind of existential rootedness that narrativity provides" (p. 35). Organizations, in that sense, are essentially storytelling entities (Boje, 1991) that try to create sense for their stakeholders (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Organizations further use "narratives and stories as features of organizational politics; (...) as elements of individual and group identities; (...) symbolic artefacts expressing deep mythological archetypes; (...) [and] as means of sharing, disseminating, and contesting knowledge and learning" (Gabriel, 2015, p. 276).

Organizations need a coherent narrative (Czarniawska, 1997). Yet, it is the multitude of voices in the sense of "polyphonic storytelling" that is typical of conversation (Norrick, 2010, p. 2). As Christensen et al. (2005) noted, "polyphony promotes shared understandings and involvement and permits a kind of collective ownership that cannot be attained through the simple application of one-way managerial models that claim consistency and coherence without founding it in the life-world of the receiver" (p. 164). Polyphony flourishes in an organizational context that embraces the flexibility, diversity, and autonomy of employees. This shows that the individual communicator as a story-telling conversationalist is essentially the pinnacle of flexible, agile integration. What matters with regard to organizational storytelling is not so much to get the point across through a coherent story but the "interactional achievement of a story between teller(s) and listener(s)" (Norrick, 2010, p. 2). Only with this agile approach to storytelling in mind can corporate communication hope to make use of content strategically, i.e., by aligning the functional impetus of content with the polyphonic openness of conversations.

Alignment of organization. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for organizational alignment since every organization is unique. Yet, agility has emerged as the concept that allows organizations to best address the challenges of a complex and changing environment. According to Dühring and Zerfass (2021), the implementation of agility hinges on six categories clustered into three areas: 1) structures and processes, 2) people and culture, and 3) technology and tools.

Agile *structures and processes* are important to foster the flexibility, responsiveness, and speed of strategic communication and produce engaging and well-aligned content to foster organization-stakeholder relationships and interactivity. Agile structures and processes are characterized by flat hierarchies, decentralized power, iterative decision-making processes, and cross-functional teams (Dühring & Zerfaß, 2021). In practice, the level of agility within communication departments differs greatly from low to high as organizations experiment with redesigning their structures and processes (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021). Many organizations are cautious in adapting elements of agility and prefer to follow a hybrid approach, where they keep some traditional vertical ways of organizing and supplement them with agile elements like new ways of leadership, cross- functional teams, or flexible approaches toward organizing work (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Nevertheless, some organizations have embraced agility to a considerable extent and can, therefore, serve as points of reference for practice theory.

A main characteristic of the agile organization is flat hierarchies, which are a result of executives yielding control and granting employees autonomy and self-reliance. It is further characterized by a flexible project organization. While some permanent tasks are the responsibility of stable work groups, projects are handled by flexible and often cross-functional teams. For temporary projects, the teams can be recruited from a staff pool and dissolve once the project or task is finished. Apart from highly sensitive issues (like CEO statements), decision making and responsibility are delegated to the teams. Employees work largely self-organized, while executives concentrate on overarching strategic tasks and on enabling their coworkers. Aside from flexible teams, there is still a clear structure, as the example of Siemens shows (see Ninova-Solovykh et al., 2019, pp. 33-34). Here, the content creation and production are organized in a process-oriented newsroom structure with three sub-teams: The planning team is responsible for the short- and long-term communication planning along the core themes and the theme architecture and serves as an interface between the various players and teams involved; the production team is in charge of developing the content; the distribution team supports its colleagues to communicate the content and plays an important consulting role in regard to analytics, channel improvement, and knowledge sharing. In addition, there is a close collaboration with other departments and functions in the organization that are involved in fostering relations with stakeholders. Agile processes are facilitated by formal and informal communication between individual coworkers, teams, and internal and external partners. Most organizations in our research have a precise schedule of regular meetings, including daily morning meetings, biweekly editorial meetings, and semi- annual strategy meetings. When members from different locations are involved, meetings are either held in a hybrid mode with the use of digital meeting tools or completely digital when meeting in person is not possible. The meeting regimen serves as a control mechanism to ensure coherence and consistency of themes, as new ideas and project progress are presented to and discussed with colleagues here. Additionally, informal horizontal communication is necessary to foster openness and innovative processes as well as learn from one another (Gronstedt, 2000; Smith, 2013).

Agile integration needs support from *culture and people*. The research by Porcu and colleagues (2017b, 2020) on drivers of integration evidenced the importance of a collaborative culture, where knowledge sharing and closely cooperating in cross-functional and flexible team structures is common, as well as an adhocracy culture of flexibility that fosters adaptability and creativity. Practitioners in our study frequently mentioned that becoming agile requires a fundamental change in corporate culture, where loosening control processes and focusing on enabling instead is essential (Denning, 2015). In further consequence, this requires a culture of trust, where faith is put in employees to do the right thing. Courage to try out new ideas should be fostered and errors, if they occur, accepted as opportunities for learning, at least in areas where errors are tolerable. As van Dyck, Frese, Baer, and Sonnentag (2005) showed, an error management culture, which comprises practices related to communicating about errors, sharing error knowledge, helping in error situations, and quickly detecting and handling errors, decreases negative error consequences and increases positive ones.

Our study shows that agile communication departments have increasingly placed a premium on versatile, self-reliant, and self-responsible employees who can think and decide for themselves. This means that the roles employees need to fulfill become more complex and demanding as boundaries between technicians and managers blur (Hogg & Doolan, 1999) and employees are expected to be all-rounders rather than specialists in one field. The need for continuous upskilling and training on the job was stressed by almost all experts. Employees not only need to educate themselves and participate in trainings, but they also need to share their acquired knowledge with their coworkers, which stresses the importance of soft skills like team spirit, cooperativeness, open-mindedness, and self-responsibility (Ninova-Solovykh et al., 2019). As Smith (2013) noted, integration is a relational concept where interpersonal connections and trust between coworkers is key.

The alignment of organization for agile integration is supported by *technology and tools*. Our research shows that all organizations make use of digital tools and platforms— such as Trello, Slack, SharePoint, and Scompler or customized systems—to improve the organization of work processes; however, the more agile organizations use technology and tools to a greater extent. The primary function of digital tools is transparency and providing operational support by displaying processes and workflows, sharing general and project specific information, and enabling exchange between all members involved in communication practice. These tools help to foster coherence and consistency of themes, aside from regular meetings that are often also supported by conferencing tools. While technology can certainly support integration practices, it cannot be a substitute for human communication and collaboration. Apart from the use of technology and tools for internal communication and cooperation, integrated communication profits from technology in many other areas like corporate listening, interactive communication with stakeholders, and the evaluation of communication effects.

Summary and conclusion. Today, organizations are faced with a more fractured, diversified, interconnected, and ephemeral communication landscape than ever before, which they need to navigate in order to foster and maintain organization-public relationships. Integrated communication, which aims to communicate with clarity, consistency, and continuity (Christensen et al., 2008), has been discussed as an approach to deal with the challenges caused by the changing corporate environment. Message consistency is a core dimension of this approach (Porcu et al., 2017a), as communicating consistently and clearly with the stakeholders of the organization can help it stand out in a cluttered marketplace (e.g., Knox & Bickerton, 2003), and consistency between messages and behavior underlies organizational legitimacy (e.g., Gioia et al., 2000; Schultz & Kitchen, 2000). The communication content and messages are the matter by which stakeholders become interested in, understand, and relate to an organization. Therefore, content is at the center of the approach to integrated communication presented here. By means of storytelling, organizations can generate interest and understanding for the themes to position the organization, reveal its identity, and foster the relationship with its stakeholders.

For messages to be consistent, interesting, and engaging for stakeholders, the contents, but also the organization with its structures, processes, culture and tools, must be aligned. Organizational alignment is a vital precondition for content alignment to establish enduring and valuable relations with stakeholders. However, organizational alignment is a contested issue ranging from an approach that emphasizes control and centralization to one that propagates self-reliance and decentralization. Referring to the "law of requisite variety" (Ashby, 1958; Conant & Ashby, 1970), the latter approach is considered superior (Christensen et al., 2008). Our own research (Ninova-Solovykh et al., 2019; Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021) shows that such an approach, which promotes managing strategic communication in an agile manner, is also considered valuable and effective by several organizations to cope with the challenges posed by a VUCA world. Thus, our framework of content-based agile integration proposes managing communication in an agile manner.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that agility does not come without its challenges (see Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021). Flatter hierarchies can increase internal power struggles and may promote a more competitive culture. Reducing or even eliminating hierarchical control structures further implies shifting responsibility from the chain of command to individual communication managers. This can have positive effects such as improved responsiveness, speed, and adaptability, as well as enhanced employee satisfaction that comes with empowerment. However, it also raises demands and job complexity for the individual employee, which necessitates investments in upskilling and self-improvement, possibly leading to stress and overload. When communication managers and teams work autonomously to a large extent, there is greater danger of errors, which raises the importance of both tolerance and trust as a means to reduce complexity. However, while risks are certainly involved with making strategic integrated communication more agile, the value for organizations to become more agile seems to outweigh the challenges (Zerfass & Schramm, 2014).

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Track

Corporate and Marketing Communications

Session Chair: Dr Sharifah Alwi

Communicating the brand promise to internal stakeholders in Higher Education Institutions.

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Most of the marketing of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) literature has focused on external branding activities (Mampaey et al. 2020; Pinar, Girard, and Basfirinci 2020) but neglected inside-out brand development (Sujchaphong, Nguyen, and Melewar 2015) through Internal Marketing (IM). The IM field, however, still faces the challenge of inconsistent conceptualizations of its nature and underlying practices and has largely ignored the particularities of the HE sector, despite its social and economic importance (Qiu, Boukis, and Storey, 2021). So, the aim of this paper is to contribute to both by exploring the meaning and elements of the IM Mix (IMM) as perceived by HEI employees.

IM has been viewed as a set of practices aimed rallying employee support of organizational marketing plans (e.g. Qaisar and Muhamad 2021) and aligning the promises to customers with the willingness and ability of employees to deliver them (e.g. Grönroos and Ravald 2011). There is universal agreement that communication is a core element of the IMM (Gwinji et al. 2020; Lings and Greenley 2009; 2005). We here propose that Internal Communications can be organized under the following key functions:

(a) Disseminating organisational values that shape the relationship with employees (Boukis, Gounaris, and Lings 2017). It is here proposed that basic human values (Schwartz 2012; Schwartz and Butenko 2014) congruence (Posner 2010, p. 536) could make employees feel that they comfortably belong in the organization and support their intrinsic motivation (Gagné 2018).

(b) Communicating the customer brand promise to internal stakeholders so that they understand their role in delivering the expected brand experience (Ahmed and Rafiq 2002; Mosley 2007; Papasolomou and Vrontis 2006; Sujchaphong, Nguyen, and Melewar 2015). The HEI marketing literature also stresses the important role of faculty and non-academic staff in university branding (Pinar et al. 2014; Pinar, Girard, and Basfirinci 2020) but there is scant research on how this is achieved by employing IM techniques (Sujchaphong, Nguyen, and Melewar 2015; Judson et al. 2009).

(c) Promoting inter-functional coordination (Gwinji et al. 2020) to increase internal value co-creation ability (Mukhtar and Azhar 2020) thus contributing to the achievement of a common set of goals.

(d) Facilitating the achievement of organisational goals (Finney 2011; Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen 2010; Piercy 2001; Piercy and Morgan 1991) and acceptance of the change required to cope with competitive pressures (Piercy 1991; Finne and Grönroos 2009) by showing internal stakeholders that their work counts (Ruck and Welch 2012).

A two-stage mixed methods design was adopted, comprising 15 semi-structured interviews with a convenience sample of employees of a public HEI and a census of all employees in public and private HEIs in Cyprus.

The teleconferencing interviews which lasted about 45 minutes each were informal discussions about the experience of working in the HE sector and the specific HEI and focused on (a) the participants' sense of belonging, (b) the institutional practices, processes and actions they felt were meaningful for them and c) their perception of the values of the institution and the ones they felt as being motivational. Each interview was recorded and iteratively pre-analyzed after completion. Saturation and convergence occurred at the 13th interview, so a total of 15 interviews were carried out to ensure no additional themes or codes emerged and attitudinal data seemed repetitious. All interviews were converted into text and re-analyzed. Codes were organized into themes, checked for patterns in the responses and examined vis-à-vis the scales in literature to construct the final measures (codes turned to variables) of the emerging constructs (themes in the data).

The scales of (a) IM (Mainardes, Rodrigues, and Teixeira, 2019), (b) internal communication (Joung et al. 2015; Foreman and Money 1995; Yildiz and Kara 2017), (c) inter-functional coordination (Voon, 2007), internal market orientation (Conduit and Mavondo 2001; Conduit, Matanda, and Mavondo 2014) were confirmed as reflecting the lived experience of the HEI employees in Cyprus and the relevant items were adopted with necessary contextual adaptations for the survey. All items were measured of a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was pilot tested using a convenience and snowball sample of (67) academic and administrative employees in HEIs in countries other than Cyprus.

The emails of all administrative and academic staff of the nine HEIs in Cyprus (three public and six private) were manually collected from the websites of the institutions. The questionnaire was uploaded on LimeSurvey and the link was included in the text of an email. The distribution was carried out over two months with two electronic reminders and resulted in a response rate of 22,4%.

Out of the 415 useable questionnaires, 216 (52%) were from academic staff, 241 females (58.1%) and 244 participants (58.8%) working in a Public University. We run an EFA using PCA with VARIMAX rotation (KMO .907, explaining 69% of the variance in the data with four components with all variables loadings above the threshold of .70. and all scale reliability analyses confirming the EFA resulting conceptualisation (Table 1).

The study presented here shows that IM is a function of Internal Communication, Internal Market Orientation and Openness to Change manifested as self-direction towards action and thought. Our study offers valuable insights into what has meaning and gives value to HEI employees, a highly skilled and diverse population. The way these elements are communicated to and espoused by the internal stakeholders can assist organizations in simultaneously offering value to employees and achieving organisational objectives by ensuring they live the brand and convey brand values to external stakeholders.

The research was carried out only in HEIs. Further research should test the proposed internal marketing contextualisation in other contexts. In this paper we have only focused on the conceptualization of IM but our study also explored its antecedents and effects on employee engagement. Future work will explore its effect on organizational performance.

Table 1. Results from EFA (Rotated Component Matrix).

	Internal Communication	Internal Market Orientation	Openness to Change	
			action	thought
Cronbach's α	**.93**	**.77**	**.70**	**.66**
My University offers employees a vision that they can believe in	**.833**			
My University provides open and transparent communication channels	**.826**			
I gain value from my work position in relation to the U. strategic goals	**.759**			
Information is freely distributed within my University	**.755**			
My University provides me with a clear career path	**.745**			
My University trusts me to make good decisions	**.740**			
My University encourages me to take initiative	**.739**			
There is good communication between the different departments in my U.	**.724**			
There is good coordination between various departments/units in my U.	**.710**			
The principle for serving students as customers applies also in my work for serving my colleagues as customers too		**.904**		
The training in my U. is linked to my role of serving my colleagues and students as customers		**.865**		
I feel that my U. allows me to do something my way even if someone might disapprove			**.817**	
I feel that my U. allows me to act independently without waiting to hear what other people are doing			**.787**	
I feel that my U. allows me to pay no attention to outside pressures when making a decision			**.702**	
I feel that my U. allows me to learn something new although it is not related to my own work				**.856**
I feel that my U. allows me to develop my own opinion on an issue by studying the facts				**.786**

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Communicating to prospective international students: The role of social media marketing communication, university corporate brand image and its effect on enrolment intention.

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Keywords: *corporate brand image, university branding, marketing communication, digital marketing communication.*

Much has been written about the factors influencing consumer-student choice or decision making of university from the perspective of current or experience students. For example, the factors that lead to the choice of enrolling in a university are the product brand itself such as the variety of programs/courses offered; the university location (Mahmoud et al, 2021); brand reputation of the university (Foroudi et al., 2017); the ranking of the university (Mahmoud et al, 2021); as well as facilities and resources (Holdford, and Reinders, 2001). While these factors are useful in guiding university marketers to position and strategise their university marketing communication campaign, these factors however do not fully capture the reason student are inclined to enrol to a university particularly from international students' perspective (Ramadhan and Gunarto, 2021).

Chapleo (2015) argues that students will evaluate and make their decision to enrol not only based on traditional marketing communication campaigns such as brochures, prospectuses, open days, bootcamp and website content, but also the way in which the message is communicated and differentiated via the university marketing communication strategy. This is especially important when students are coming from an international context. Universities today are increasingly competing for international students in response to trends in global student mobility, diminishing university funds and government-backed recruitment campaigns (Hemsley-Brown et al, 2016). HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) reported a total number of 2,862,620 students studying at higher education institutions in the UK in 2021/22 an increase of 4% from 2020/21. Of the total number of students, 2,182,560 students were UK home students and 679,970 non-UK (HESA, 2023).

Accordingly, having a sound marketing communication campaign can signal the right impression and image the university wishes to communicate, (Gregory et al., 2013), can contribute to the University brand experiences which can impact on student's choice of university and enrolment intention (Cao et al., 2020). Social media marketing can also create online communities, increase outreach and interactions, engage more students, and help form a global reputation (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021). Using social media within a university's overall marketing communication strategy can also assists in increasing the conversion rate of students to enrol based on the social media marketing communication of the university (Rutter et al., 2016). However, Universities in UK have been widely criticised for their lack of approach on adopting new and digital media, especially as many prefer to use the traditional approach to marketing (Rutter et al, 2016) and previous research has been limited to the use of sampling among local and current university students (instead of prospective students) (Bennett, and Ali-Choudhury, 2009), examine the impact of traditional and social media separately and given the newness of the subject, studies surround the topic are mainly conceptual. Understanding how universities use social media in relation to its traditional campaign will help scholars to understand the theoretical contribution to the current traditional marketing communication model and practically, inform university marketing practitioners to target prospective international students better while maintaining attractiveness among local prospective students. Therefore, our research question is as follows:

> *How can a university increase its corporate brand image and student enrolment intention through university's social media marketing?*

The study is informed by mixed methods approach. First, the study explores the dimensions and measures of the university social media marketing and secondly, these measures and constructs are validated via an empirical survey method. The qualitative stage comprised of focus group discussions, semi-structured in-depth interviews and content analysis of the Facebook and Twitter pages of universities. The quantitative stage was a questionnaire conducted with 407 prospective students.

In summary, by drawing on the corporate brand image (Balmer, 2013), signaling theory (Spence, 1973) and the marketing and corporate communication framework (Balmer, 2023), this research develops a holistic conceptual model to understand prospective international student's attitudinal and behavioural response to the communication of the online corporate brand image. Implication to both academic and practical are seen especially in the context of incorporating social media into the overall strategy of university marketing communications and practically, positioning the university to prospective international students who, are unlikely to have visited UK institutions when evaluating and making enrolment decisions.

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What is known about employee communication regarding LGBT+: A scoping review.

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Keywords: *LGBT+, employee communication, scoping review, workplace discrimination, employee well-being.*

Globally, LGBT+ (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender identified) employees in 81 countries are protected by labor laws, for example, protection against discrimination at the workplace (ILGA World 2020). Organizations also support and protect LGBT+ employees more directly. For example, through anti-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity (Human Rights Campaign Foundation 2022) or sponsoring Pride events (McKinsey & Company 2020). However, the terms "pinkwashing" and "rainbow-washing" have emerged for organizations that use policies and initiatives as mere marketing and impression management strategies without any real intention of putting them into action or, worse, whose organizational practices actually contradict those policies (e.g., not providing an inclusive workplace for LGBT+ employees; Rice 2022).

Thus, it is not surprising that the situation of LGBT+ employees in organizations is still often characterized by discrimination. In the U.S. as well as in the European Union and Canada, many LGBT+ employees report feeling discriminated against in the workplace (FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2020; The Williams Institute 2021; Statistic Canada 2021). Discrimination in the workplace often occurs as communicative action by superiors and/or co-workers toward LGBT+ employees, such as (a) hearing negative comments, slurs, or jokes, (b) microaggressions, (c) harassment, (d) obscene or sexually explicit comments, and (e) pressure to "play along" or take part in sexual discussions, humor, or actions (McKinsey & Company 2020; The Williams Institute 2021).

Workplace discrimination has negative consequences for both organizations and LGBT+ employees. Gay and lesbian employees who feel discriminated against have higher turnover intentions and lower organizational commitment, organizational-based self-esteem, and job satisfaction (Button 2001). Further, experiences of discrimination in the workplace have been linked to higher levels of psychological distress and health-related problems in LGBT+ employees (Velez, Moradi, and Brewster 2013).

Individual and organizational measures can counteract discrimination and increase employees' well-being. On the individual level, Mara, Ginieis, and Brunet-Icart (2021) outline in their systematic review various strategies how LGBT employees address discrimination in the workplace, including several communicative behaviors (e.g., planning replies to discrimination, consulting friends/family/services/organizational decision makers). On the organizational level, diversity trainings and ally networks were found to increase LGBT+ employees' well-being (Perales 2022).

Measures to counteract discrimination against LGBT+ employees involve communicative behavior by the organization with their employees and also communication by each and every employee. Employee communication is defined by Einwiller, Sackmann, and Zerfaß (2021a) as all communicative and informative processes in which organizational members are addressed in their role as employees or as potential employees, or communicate themselves. Employee communication is essential when analyzing measures to counteract discrimination experiences of LGBT+ employees.

However, a review on communication about LGBT+ by organizations with their employees as well as communication by employees within and outside the organization is still lacking. This review therefore aims to provide an overview of the existing literature on employee communication, including information on the outcomes of this communication for employees and organizations, the methodological approaches used, and current research gaps. Our research question as follows:

RQ: What is known about employee communication regarding LGBT+?

These aims and the corresponding research question reflect the purposes of scoping reviews suggested by Munn et al. (2018), thus a scoping review is planned. The review follows the PRISMA-ScR guidelines for scoping reviews (Tricco et al. 2018) and the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews (Page et al. 2021). A study protocol was preregistered on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/jepwk/?view_only=f74a989e79234285a5b8a163b5365452, 23.12.2022).

To be eligible for this scoping review, papers need to address any written, verbal, or non-verbal communication inside an organization regarding LGBT+-related topics, issues, or employees. Also, any written, verbal, or non-verbal communication of employees regarding their organizations' LGBT+ agenda (i.e., communication directed outside of their organization) makes a paper eligible. Both published and gray literature reporting theoretical or empirical findings will be included.

The databases *Communication and Mass Media*, *Communication Abstracts*, *Psycinfo*, *Web of Science*, and *Scopus* will be searched for eligible papers. To this end, search strings were created using combinations of keywords and corresponding synonyms regarding (1) LGBT+, (2) communication, and (3) organization from the literature (Einwiller, Sackmann, and Zerfaß 2021b; Men and Tkalac Verčič 2021; Siegel et al. 2022; Lee, Ylioja, and Lackey 2016). In addition, reference lists of eligible papers will be scrutinized for further eligible papers.

All records retrieved from the databases will be deduplicated and additionally found records will be added. Two coders first check the titles and abstracts of the retrieved records against the specified eligibility criteria, then further scrutinize the full papers of the eligible records. To ensure unbiased coding, joint coding sessions are held and a random sample of 100 records will be coded individually by each coder (kappa should exceed .75).

From eligible papers, information will be retrieved regarding publication details, content of the paper, and information of empirical studies. This information will be reported in a structured way according to LGBT+ and employee communication characteristics, as well as methodological approaches.

The planned scoping review provides a comprehensive overview of existing papers on LGBT+ employee communication regarding its outcomes for employees and organizations. Results presented at the conference will elucidate research gaps regarding LGBT+ employee communication. Furthermore, communication professionals will receive information on how to create an inclusive workplace, plan internal LGBT+ policies and programs, and respond to negative, externally directed communication by employees.

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Track

Brand Communications

Session Chair: Professor Sabine Einwiller

‘A huge political experiment’ – exploring the political brand positioning of political parties in jersey from an internal-external perspective.

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Keywords: *political branding, brand identity, brand positioning, marketing communications, Crown Dependencies, Jersey.*

It is widely accepted that political parties, candidates-politicians, party leaders, election campaigns, political groups, policy initiatives and legislators can be conceptualised as *political brands* (Marland *et al*. 2017; Simons 2016). Political brands act as short-cut mechanisms to communicate desired positioning to a multitude of stakeholders such as supporters, activists, the media, employees and most importantly voters. In addition, political brands are designed to act as points of differentiation from political rivals in terms of policy initiatives, ideology, and values (Marland *et al*. 2017; Pich and Newman 2019). Furthermore, political brands are constructed to encourage voter identification and support. Indeed, political brands signify a series of promises and envisaged aspirations, which they will enact if successful at the polls (Rutter *et al.* 2015). One area that has seen limited attention is *political brand positioning*.

In order to contextualise this study, the research focused on the Channel Island of Jersey, a British Crown Dependency. Jersey has four political parties – Jersey Alliance [formed 2021], Reform Jersey [formed 2014], Jersey Liberal Conservatives [formed 2021] and the Progress Party of Jersey [formed 2021]. Jersey Alliance currently has 10 Members of Parliament. Reform Jersey has 5 Members of Parliament, and the Progress Party of Jersey has 2 Members of Parliament. The Jersey Liberal Conservatives currently have no elected members. The remaining members of the 49-seat Parliament are not part of any political party and sit as independent politicians. Jersey has a population of just under 100,000 across 9 constituencies. The island’s General Election was contested on the 22nd June 2022. Therefore, Jersey’s four political parties served as ideal brands to frame this investigation. Therefore, this study aimed to

- Explore the brand positioning of party-political brands in the context of the British Crown Dependency of Jersey from an internal of party candidate-politician perspective.
- Understand the brand positioning of party-political brands in the context of the British Crown Dependency of Jersey from an external young voter perspective.
- Map out and compare the desired and actual brand positioning of the four political party brands

Political brand positioning can be seen as a strategic approach where political brands envisage a desired position which include both brand names, logos and other identifiable features on all communication touch points (Baines *et al.* 2014; Ronzoni *et al.* 2018; Pich *et. al.* 2020). Indeed, political brands are difficult to manage (Armannsdottir *et al.* 2019). For example, political brands are tailored to resonate with voters and developed from the wants and needs of constituents. Further, there are many typologies of political brands ranging from political parties, candidates-politicians, party leaders, election campaigns, political groups, policy initiatives (Pich 2022). However, existing research has tended to focus on established political party brands rather than new-emerging political brands or political brands in dynamic political systems (Marland 2017; Newman and Newman 2022; Pich 2022). In addition, there are limited studies on political brands that focus on an internal *and* external perspective and further research is called for to strengthen understanding of political brands in different settings and contexts (Marland 2017; Pich et al. 2020; Rutter *et al.* 2015; Simons 2016). Finally, there is a paucity of research dedicated to political brand positioning, especially how political brand positioning is developed, managed and ultimately conceptualised (Baines *et al.* 2014; Pich *et. al.* 2020; Smith and French 2009). Therefore, this study investigates the brand positioning of four party-political brands from an insider and outsider perspective in the context of the British Crown Dependency of Jersey.

As this study aimed to explore the brand positioning of new party-political brands from a multi-stakeholder perspective, a qualitative interpretivist approach was considered an appropriate research strategy. Qualitative research is ideal for exploratory studies as the approach attempts to delve beneath the surface and capture rich insights into perceptions, attitudes, feelings and behaviour (Bell *et al.* 2019; Warren and Karner 2010). In terms of sampling, this study adopts a purposive sampling framework. Purposive sampling is an appropriate sampling strategy as the study aims investigate the brand positioning of party-political brands from an internal-external standpoint. Stage one of the study focuses on *internal stakeholders* - categorised as party candidates-politicians. Stage two of the study focuses on *external stakeholders* - categorised as young voters aged 18-24 years. As part of stage one, this study adopts semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews have been described as ‘non-standardised’ conversation with a purpose and are facilitated by the researcher and supported by an interview guide structured around broad themes developed from the existing academic literature (Saunders *et al*. 2016). Twelve semi-structured interviews were carried out in November 2021-January 2022 with candidates-politicians from the four political party brands. Interviews were undertaken on video call (MS Teams) or telephone. In terms of stage two, this study adopts focus group discussions as the principal method for exploring the political brands from an external young voter perspective. Focus group discussions Further, focus group discussions are designed to encourage “*broad discussion among multiple participants to capture both deeper insight and differing ideas on a particular subject*” (Halliday et al. 2021:2145). Both methods allow for greater flexibility and a natural-like conversation with a purpose compared to other methods (Bell *et al*. 2019). Five focus group discussions with young voters 18-24 years [30 participants in total] were carried out face-to-face in 18th – 21st May 2022. Participants from stages one and two were given a pseudonym to ensure their identification and participation remains anonymous. Thematic analysis will serve as this study’s analytical strategy. More specially, an inductive thematic approach will be adopted to uncover the themes based on the raw findings and not influenced by existing frameworks or templates (Saunders *et al*. 2016). This six-step approach to thematic analysis developed by Braun *et al*. (2016), not only serves as a pragmatic analytical strategy but also provides rigor and trustworthiness to the interpretation process.

Based on our initial analysis of the findings, six broad themes were uncovered as part of the investigation into the brand positioning of party-political brands within the British Crown Dependency of Jersey. The first three themes relate to the political brand positioning from an insider perspective. *Firstly*, political brand positioning appears to be influenced by the outcome of the 2013 island-wide referendum, which delivered a mandate for changing the political system and strengthened the case for the introduction of 'party' political brands opposed rather than a system of independent politicians/political brands. *Secondly*, political brand positioning is shaped by the political environment and introduced to facilitate change as it was '*difficult to get things done*' (P2) under the former political system. *Third*, political brand positioning seems to go beyond ideology and includes dimensions such as the formation, management, structure, relationships and aspired identity [physical and intangible elements] of the party-political brands.

The final three themes relate to the political brand positioning from an external standpoint. *Firstly*, young voters welcomed the introduction of party-political brands to the dynamic political environment of Jersey. Young voters believed the introduction of political parties would bring '*much needed clarity*' (P3FG3), '*clearer differentiation*' (P2FG1) and '*simplify choice in elections as we will finally know what politicians stand for*' (P5FG2). However, there was limited awareness of the four party-political brands across all focus group discussions and limited understanding of the positioning, identity or policies of the party-political brands. Young voters argued that they felt '*frustrated*' (P4FG1) about the limited understanding of the positioning of the four political-party brands and believed parties had failed to '*reach out*' (P3FG5), '*make a connection with young voters*' (P1FG1) even though young voters were '*engaged and interested*' (P3FG3) in the upcoming General Election [focus groups carried out during the official General Election campaign 2022]. *Third*, young voters called for the political-party brands to campaign with appealing and appropriate tactics designed to '*engage young voters*' (P2FG2) rather than '*outdated*' (P5FG2) and '*alienating*' (P2FG1) electioneering methods. Therefore, our initial findings suggest that political brand positioning complex, multifaceted and ever-changing and there appears to be inconsistency between desired and actual positioning. However, our core themes may evolve once we concluded analysis for stages one and two. Nevertheless, this study will address explicit calls for more insight in this area (Baines *et al.* 2014; Marland *et al*. 2017; Needham and Smith 2015; Pich *et al*. 2020) and reveal first-hand accounts of political brands in terms of values, ideological beliefs, associations-perceptions, experiences, expectations and alignment from an internal and external perspective (Baines *et al.* 2014; Marland *et al*. 2017; Pich and Newman 2019; Rutter *et al.* 2015).

The findings will have implications for academics and practitioners beyond the world of politics. For example, this study will provide brand managers and internal stakeholders at large with a framework of how to position new or existing brands and strategically manage a brand's desired and actual positioning. This in turn will allow internal stakeholders to respond and address any inconsistencies, amend desired positioning and manage communicated identity. This is crucial as it will help Jersey's political parties and also independent candidates with a mechanism of how to audit positioning and desired/current identity which is crucial on the run up to the Island's General Election scheduled for 22nd June 2022. Nevertheless, the introduction of political parties to Jersey has been described as a '*huge experiment…no one knows how it is going to pan out*' (P3). Only after the 2022 General Election, will we know if the new party-political brands have made an impact and have communicated clear positioning.

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Convincing the cyber-sceptics: How do end-consumers perceive the motives and authenticity of customer-entrepreneurs?

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Keywords: *Customer entrepreneurship, scepticism, social network, end-user experience.*

In today's digital economy, a new breed of customers has recently stepped out of their traditional role, and instead of remaining as "passive buyers", these customers now use digital platforms to undertake their own business activities (Park et al., 2021a; Park et al., 2021b). This shift away from customers' pre-defined roles in the business models of digital platform providers (Cusumano et al., 2020; Saadatmand et al., 2019), to become proactive commercial actors, means a new set of proactive entrepreneurs has emerged into the online business landscape (Park et al., 2021a; Park et al., 2021b). These entrepreneurial customers use platform offerings not only to engage in social networking, but also to create and capture value by: (a) advertising products and services; (b) communicating with end-consumers; and/or (c) accepting payments from end-consumers (Park et al., 2021a).

This phenomenon is referred to as *customer entrepreneurship*, which is defined as "the entrepreneurial activities of actors conventionally categorized as end-consumers or end-users in ecosystems" (Park et al., 2021b, p.1). Since these customer-entrepreneurs adopt the posture of both customers and entrepreneurs (Biraghi et al., 2018), they share the characteristics of both categories, forming a distinctive group.

Researchers have already started paying attention to the customer entrepreneurship phenomenon. Three distinct streams of research can be identified. Firstly, some researchers have viewed customer entrepreneurship through the lens of institutional logic. Secondly, other researchers have explored the topic from the perspective of the customer-entrepreneurs themselves. Finally, some scholars have investigated how platform providers can convert customer entrepreneurship into a revenue stream (Park et al., 2021a).

However, to the best of our knowledge, no prior studies have explored the phenomenon of customer-entrepreneurship from the perspective of the end-consumers. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap in knowledge, exploring key questions such as how end-consumers perceive the motives of customer-entrepreneurs, and how these perceptions affect their level of scepticism towards them. Another important facet to be investigated is whether an end-customer's previous experience with the customer-entrepreneur will affect the degree of scepticism, i.e. whether previous experience plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived motives and consumer scepticism. Moreover, we will explore how end-consumers perceive the authenticity of customer-entrepreneurs, as well as the interplay between perceived motives and perceived authenticity, and between scepticism and perceived authenticity. Finally, our study will shed light on whether end-consumers' scepticism plays a mediating role in the relationship between the perceived motives and perceived authenticity of customer-entrepreneurs, and how this perception of authenticity influences end-consumers' satisfaction and loyalty to those entrepreneurs.

This study will use a quantitative approach to test the relationship between the study variables. We are looking for a sample of at least 600 participants. The participants should be end-consumers who had experience in dealing with customer-entrepreneurs. The data will be collected through a professional research agency in the UK.

The questionnaire has been developed and pre-tested with five marketing academics and another five PhD students, and subsequently modified and finalized.

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A brand identity crisis? Evaluating the challenges and opportunities of euro 2020.

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Keywords: *brand identity, host city, crisis,* MSE, *Euro 2020.*

UEFA Euro 2020 is a Major Sport Event (MSE), which provides a unique contextualisation for this study. To celebrate the tournament's 60th anniversary, it was hosted on a one-off basis across an unprecedented, polycentric network of eleven countries (Stura et al., 2017; UEFA, 2021). As such, the event represented compelling branding and cultural opportunities, in addition to considerable challenges, further complicated by the restrictions facing many MSEs due to Covid-19. The unprecedented nature of this tournament offers compelling opportunities to explore the following:

- The creation and development of Euro 2020 host city brand identities.
- The degree of brand identity alignment between host cities, and the impact on the Euro 2020 brand.
- The extent to which the Euro 2020 brand may contribute towards the development of relationships between host cities.

Central to the development of a MSE is the formation of a clear identity based on tangible and intangible cues, often referred to as its brand (Heslop, Nadeau, O'Reilly, & Armenakyan, 2013). Brand architecture refers to the structure of a brand portfolio and the relationship between the names, logos and symbols used in different market segments (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). The uppermost level is the corporate brand, the legal entity under which an organisation is formed. This represents an *umbrella*, under which multiple sub-brand identities are contained (Brexendorf & Keller, 2017).

Recent work recognises a broad range of inter-related brands within a sport ecosystem (Kunkel & Biscaia, 2020). Within a MSE setting, brand architecture can be explored by examining the hierarchical relationships and the extent of alignment between the umbrella brand of the MSE property and the host city sub-brands. This may provide further insight into how MSEs are developed and aligned when they involve multiple identities and sub-brands, addressing calls for deeper understanding of the paradoxical nature of MSEs, such as how they may be positioned and used to unite communities nationally and internationally (Müller, 2017).

In-depth, semi-structured 'elite' interview data was collected from senior industry executives with a clear remit within their roles for contributing to the organisation of Euro 2020 from a host city perspective. A thematic analysis was employed, allowing the inductive identification of emerging themes. Particular attention was paid to conformability, specifically inter-coder agreement, to assess the extent to which the data was analysed in the same way by the researchers.

Five key themes emerged from the interviews. The first relates to *brand identity signals* developed by each host city (sub-brand) and includes physical elements such as: signage, communication devices, mascots and volunteers; and intangible elements such as: the vision, values and long-term aspirations of each host. The second focuses on *brand management* and includes aspects such as planning, positioning, responsibility and a drive for consistency across all touchpoints. The third acknowledges the *complex ecosystem* related to Euro 2020 brand identities, including the presence of interrelated stakeholders and competitive yet open relationships between cities, a reverential relationship between hosts and UEFA (corporate brand), and relationships with national-local policy makers. The fourth involves *host city differentiation*, whereby hosts have flexibility to develop independent initiatives and programmes often unique from other hosts as long as these are supported by the corporate brand. This links to the final theme, centring on the *dominance of the corporate brand*. The corporate brand creates an overall visualisation for host city brands and it is each host's responsibility to develop such aspirations into reality by facilitating the tangible and intangible elements of brand identities.

Host city brand identities are created and managed based on a clear vision and desired requirements put forward by the corporate brand (UEFA) yet each host is responsible for the operationalisation of each identity. Further, hosts are aligned to the aspired corporate brand identity; however, some misalignment is encouraged in order for hosts to develop tailored identities to meet the wants, needs and culture of each jurisdiction. Therefore, findings suggest that the corporate brand envisioned the MSE as an occasion to illustrate *unity in diversity* of cities and nations across Europe and instil this mantra in the hearts and minds of citizens and spectators.

Theoretically, this study contributes to better understanding of how MSEs create and manage brand identities and how MSEs are developed and aligned when they involve multiple identities and sub-brands. In addition, calls for deeper insight into how MSEs are positioned and used to unite communities nationally and internationally are addressed. Managerially, guidance in developing blended, pragmatic approaches towards cultivating multiple brand identities with a degree of alignment is offered. This approach can enable future MSEs to develop distinct yet related identities and also create positive experiences for stakeholders and establish long-term societal benefits.

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