

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding the roles of integrity in ethical social media marketing practices among franchise businesses in Malaysia

Nur Aulia Fahada Misaridin, Nurul Ashykin Abd Aziz*, Ahmad Taufik Nursal

Faculty of Industrial Management, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Lebuhr Persiaran Tun Khalil Yaakob, 26300 Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia

Abstract - This study explores how integrity influences ethical social media marketing strategies among Malaysian franchise businesses. Using a qualitative research design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with representatives from six franchise companies selected via purposive sampling to capture diverse insights. Thematic analysis revealed four key dimensions where integrity significantly shapes ethical marketing conduct: brand credibility, cultural and contextual alignment, customer relationship management, and consumer privacy protection. The findings show that integrity, expressed through transparency, honesty, and responsibility, builds brand trust, sustains consumer loyalty, and supports culturally appropriate communication. Furthermore, upholding integrity in consumer data protection strengthens organisational reputation in the digital realm. Ultimately, the study indicates that integrity serves as both a moral foundation and a strategic driver for long-term ethical marketing, offering valuable implications for franchise organisations seeking to align digital engagement with responsible, trustworthy branding.

Article History

Received : 4 November 2025

Revised : 1 March 2026

Accepted : 3 May 2026

Published : 30 June 2026

Keywords

Social media marketing

Ethical marketing

Ethical social media

Integrity

Franchise businesses

1. Introduction

People use social media to connect with family and friends, learn new things, and stay updated on current events, and its use continues to grow as new platforms gain popularity (Kamboj, 2020; Pelletier et al., 2020). Social media is used not merely for socialisation and entertainment, but also for business purposes (Shi & Ismail, 2021; Vithayathil et al., 2020). According to a worldwide survey by Chevalier (2024), seven out of ten online shoppers aged 27 to 42 had made purchases directly through social media by the second quarter of 2023. Since the emergence of social media, the corporate environment has changed. With the creation of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and most recently TikTok, marketers now have more effective tools to communicate with their target audiences. According to Emini (2021), social media marketing (SMM) involves utilising various channels to increase brand recognition. Additionally, SMM influences purchasing decisions, as Sudirjo et al. (2023) note. Furthermore, businesses use SMM to acquire new customers and develop customer relationships (Dubbekink et al., 2021; Z. Wang & Kim, 2017). As Amegbe et al. (2023) note, social media has transformed how businesses operate today. Businesses are seeking ways to capitalise on the benefits of social media use to enhance their performance, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing and emerging countries. In 2021, there were approximately 332.99 million SMEs worldwide, a slight increase from 328.5 million in 2019 (Dyvik, 2023). However, businesses' emergence in social media marketing has raised ethical issues related to integrity. Ethical and integrity issues in social media marketing include data collection and use, privacy, trust, transparency, and more (Dhiman, 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Rao, 2021). Therefore, this paper explores ethical social media marketing for SMEs.

Pennington (2021) claimed that social media plays a vital role in today's world, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, as people increasingly depend on it for the latest updates and news and to connect with others. Furthermore, as Mason et al. (2021) note, customers have increasingly used social media to select items, gather information, evaluate them, and make purchases since the pandemic. Thus, many businesses have started using social media as marketing tools, as noted by Nurjaman (2021), Stiadi et al. (2023), Chaudhary et al. (2023), and Modreanu and Toma (2023). However, Thanh et al. (2021) note that social media platforms spread a lot of misinformation and fake news during that time. As a result, using social media for corporate marketing might raise several ethical concerns. Appel et al. (2020) note that privacy has become a growing concern among consumers regarding social media marketing, and consumers view businesses negatively because of this issue. Dhiman (2023) also highlighted several issues related to data collection through social media, such as transparency, data security, fake news and more. Therefore, ethical social media marketing needs to be highlighted. This paper aims to explore the role of integrity in ethical social media marketing practices among franchise businesses in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media provides a unique commercial communication channel. Social media marketing is an emerging business technique that uses online platforms to promote products, services, information, and ideas (Dahnil et al., 2014). It is defined as using social media platforms, along with related technology and capabilities, to achieve marketing goals alongside other marketing communication methods. Social media marketing uses social media apps as an extension of traditional marketing. Social media marketing includes all activities conducted on social media platforms without

payment. Social media is essential to strategic planning in today's corporate environment. Marketers use social media marketing because of the platforms' broad appeal, the need to reduce costs, and their rivals' activity on these networks. Features like entertainment, engagement, trendiness, advertising, and personalisation define this type of marketing. It provides ample opportunities to establish strong brand-consumer interactions (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020). Businesses have realised that social media is one of the best ways to empower and engage with customers in recent years (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021). It enhances consumer-brand communications and enables the development of unique brand identities. The leveraging effect that social media marketing has between brands and customers has also been observed. The entertaining element of social media marketing is influenced by the experiences that marketers create on these platforms, which users find engaging and dynamic. Entertainment fosters positive emotions, encouraging consumers to stay engaged with companies (Capitello et al., 2014). Consumers share news, images, and information about their favourite companies on social media platforms to find entertainment and pleasure.

In social media marketing, interaction enables users to share information and allows two-way communication between businesses and consumers. Unlike traditional marketing techniques, social media marketing lets businesses stay engaged and address requests for custom products, recommendations for new ones, or customer grievances. By fostering connections between companies and consumers, this engagement raises brand recognition, encourages brand loyalty, and reduces uncertainty when making purchases. Social media marketing offers several advantages, including real-time interaction with customers, the ability to reach a wide range of audiences, and increased brand recognition through influencer and content marketing (Musa et al., 2016). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide powerful tools to assess campaign effectiveness and target demographics. Additionally, social media can help foster a sense of community around a business by encouraging users to interact and share their experiences (Xikmatovna, 2023). Organisations use social media for various goals, such as information sharing and searching, branding, advertising, and promotion (Aguilar et al., 2022). They perform market research and reach out to new clients, using the platforms to generate referrals and build customer relationships. Social media is also an important tool for direct customer engagement, providing a channel for customer care activities and simplifying feedback collection (Tajudeen et al., 2018). Companies can use these actions to increase brand presence, engage their audience, and build a more interactive and responsive relationship with customers (Parveen et al., 2015).

2.2 Small and Medium Enterprises

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in both job creation and economic growth (Koirala, 2019). SMEs are classified as autonomous, non-subsidiary businesses with fewer than a specified number of employees, a threshold that varies across national statistical systems. Generally, the upper limit in the European Union is 250 employees, while in the United States, businesses with fewer than 500 employees are classified as SMEs. Other nations set the cap at 200 employees. Small businesses often employ fewer than 50 people, whereas microenterprises employ 5 to 10 people. For example, Muda and Musman (2022) state that Malaysia categorises SMEs by the number of full-time workers or annual income. In the manufacturing sector, SMEs are defined as companies with fewer than 200 full-time workers or with annual sales of RM50 million. In the services and other industries, SMEs are defined as businesses that employ fewer than 75 full-time workers or have an annual sales turnover of less than RM20 million. Another set of characteristics used to define SMEs is financial assets. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely acknowledged for their pivotal role in global economic development. They are the principal drivers of job creation and production growth. A thriving private sector, especially SMEs, is commonly seen as crucial to sustainable and equitable economic growth. These businesses are vital to developing nations because they can boost local entrepreneurship, create jobs, improve income distribution, combat poverty, expand the rural economy, and increase exports of non-primary commodities, particularly manufactured goods (Amoah et al., 2022; Glonti et al., 2021).

2.3 Ethics in Marketing

Morality and honesty are central to ethics. Ethics involves creating rules and guidelines supported by moral behaviour in social and group settings. Marketing executives' interactions with customers, competitors, stakeholders, and members of their organisations all shape their ethical decisions. Ethical marketing strategies guide managers and marketers in addressing ethical challenges, including those related to social media marketing (Lee & Jin, 2019). Ethical marketing is a code of morals and conduct used in marketing practices. Some researchers describe it as the systematic study of how moral standards apply to marketing decisions (Voronov et al., 2021). Marketing is inherently ethical and moral, encompassing product, price, location, and promotional ethics. Jais et al. (2023) stated that promotional ethics concerns moral dilemmas in advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. These concerns might include advertising content, sponsors, or agencies. Salespeople may also encounter moral challenges while dealing with consumers (Rousselet et al., 2020). Furthermore, ethical issues may develop in sales efforts aimed at customers, brokers, and merchants, as well as advertising links with media organisations. Chong and Patwa (2023) investigated the elements that influence ethical marketing communication and its effects on value generation. Ethical communication is positively associated with value creation for everyone involved. The study emphasises the necessity of ethical principles and mutual agreements among stakeholders to achieve successful ethical communication outcomes. These findings highlight how ethical marketing communication strategies can improve brand reputation, increase consumer trust, and boost social well-being.

2.4 Ethical issues in Social Media

2.4.1 Privacy

Privacy is a significant ethical concern on social media, as platforms often require users to reveal personal information to create accounts (Jozani et al., 2020). Platforms use this data to customise experiences and target advertising, but it also raises concerns about misconduct and data breaches. Users must understand potential risks, such as identity theft and stalking, and take precautions to protect their privacy, including using strong passwords and enabling two-factor authentication (Meral, 2021). Sensitive personal data, such as health information, credit card details, and identification numbers, requires strict security. To avoid identity theft, fraud, and other online scams, both consumers and businesses must exercise caution while handling this information (Dhiman, 2023). Understanding these risks and following best practices can help users protect their personal information in the digital era.

2.4.2 Social media

Social media networks like Facebook and Instagram offer free services, such as account creation, but also collect a substantial amount of user data to enable personalised advertising. Companies such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook use this data to target consumers based on user activity, age, gender, and geography. This personalised advertising employs machine learning algorithms to analyse behavioural patterns, such as regular commutes and website visits, to enhance user experience. For instance, smartphones automatically compute daily routes and traffic times, and users are directed to frequently visited websites. However, using personal data for targeted advertising can evoke negative emotions if people perceive marketers' tactics as invasive or unethical (Krafft et al., 2017). Data breaches and misuse have raised privacy concerns, as evidenced by incidents such as Facebook's data breach (Rehman, 2019), which led to the unauthorised use of millions of users' details. Such breaches undermine trust and potentially damage the relationship between businesses and customers. Research on data exploitation in China, along with the high-profile Facebook debacle, highlights growing consumer concern about privacy on social media platforms.

2.4.3 Authenticity

Beyond using social media platforms to promote businesses, several SMEs have used influencer marketing as a marketing tool (Agustian et al., 2023; Erwin et al., 2022; Gustavsson et al., 2018; Vidani et al., 2023). However, authenticity has become an ethical issue related to influencer marketing. To maintain their credibility and authenticity with their followers, successful influencers often select brands that complement their personal brand (Abidin, 2018). Consequently, brand endorsements on influencers' pages are typically presented subtly, indirectly, and integrated seamlessly into their lifestyle choices (Argyris et al., 2020). Influencers who promote products they do not actually use or believe in may raise concerns about inauthenticity in influencer marketing. Followers may trust them less if they perceive the influencer as more interested in making money than providing sincere advice. Insincere endorsements can damage the legitimacy of the promoted brands and the influencer's reputation, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of the marketing strategy (Audrezet et al., 2020).

2.5 Theories Related to Social Media Marketing and Ethics

2.5.1 UTAUT2

Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis created the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) in 2003 to identify the fundamental determinants of ICT adoption, measured by behavioural intention to use and actual usage (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The UTAUT model proposes four major influences on ICT adoption: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Performance expectancy refers to the belief that using the system will improve job performance, while effort expectancy pertains to how easy the system is to use. Social influence denotes the perception that significant others believe one should use the system, and facilitating conditions refer to the perceived availability of organisational and technical support. The UTAUT model offers more effective predictive power by integrating 32 variables from previous models (TRA, TPB, TAM, MM, C-TPB-TAM, MPCU, IDT, and SCT) into four primary factors and four moderating variables, resulting in a 70% prediction efficiency, a notable improvement over the original TAM and its extension, TAM2.

Recently, Venkatesh and colleagues updated the UTAUT model by incorporating three new constructs: hedonic motivation, price, and habit. Hedonic motivation relates to intrinsic satisfaction gained from using the system, while the price construct concerns the expenditures associated with purchasing products and services. The final construct, habit, describes how individuals tend to perform behaviours automatically as a result of learned experiences. According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), these modifications to the UTAUT model (UTAUT2) significantly increase the explained variance in behavioural intention and technology usage, providing a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing technology adoption. Several studies have employed the UTAUT2 to examine social media marketing adoption among SMEs, in contrast to earlier models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). For instance, Bamansoor et al. (2020) explored social commerce use among Malaysians using the UTAUT2. Additionally, a 2016 study examined social media marketing adoption in Ireland, using UTAUT2 (Gaylard, 2016).

2.5.2 Media richness theory

According to Ishii et al. (2019), Media Richness Theory was initially developed as a framework for describing and assessing the effectiveness of communication channels within organisations. The primary objective of Media Richness Theory is to provide managers with a method to identify and address communication issues, such as ambiguity, which

refers to the inability to obtain the necessary information to complete tasks at the expected level or multiple, conflicting interpretations of the same task, goal, or objective (Vala et al., 2022). The theory is grounded in contingency theory and information processing theory. Daft and Lengel argue that managers should select communication media based on their ability to reduce ambiguity and support clear interpretation and understanding. Ambiguity is a critical factor in determining the most suitable communication medium for each task. According to the theory, messages with higher ambiguity require richer communication channels to be conveyed effectively. Daft and Lengel developed a four-item scale to assess media richness across channels, including face-to-face interaction, telephone, written personal communication, formal written communication, and numerical formal communication. These media are evaluated based on:

- i) Speed of Feedback (Immediacy): The ability to provide immediate feedback.
- ii) Variety of Channels: The capacity to transmit multiple types of stimuli, such as audio and visual information.
- iii) Personality of the Source: The level of personal involvement in the communication.
- iv) Language Richness and Variety: The usage of a diverse and sophisticated language.

Studies have applied this theory to businesses' media and social media usage. Mohamad (2020) found that media richness, which combines print, web, and in-person communication, can significantly impact consumer loyalty and trust. The study also suggests that integrating various media can help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions. Additionally, Hasim et al. (2020) found that brand loyalty and media richness positively influence purchase intention, with consumers more likely to purchase when social media platforms like Instagram provide substantial media richness. Aesthetics, media content, and user interface measure this media richness. Moran et al. (2020) also noted a positive relationship between content media richness and consumer-brand engagement outcomes.

2.5.3 *Virtue ethics theory*

In line with the ideas of Aristotle and Plato, virtue ethics emphasises the value of moral character and virtues (Arjoon, 2000). Virtue theory differs from other moral theories by grounding morality in facts about human nature and emphasising habits and long-term objectives. It encompasses more than behaviour; it also includes aspirations, preferences, and dislikes, all of which contribute to the formation of identity and character. This approach strongly emphasises cultivating virtue as the foundation of moral growth and ethical action. According to virtue theory, morality results from developing virtues, positive character traits and a person is deemed morally decent if they exhibit these qualities (Wang et al., 2016). This ethical paradigm highlights the agent's motivations and character rather than only the material aims. It is also known as virtue ethics, virtue-based ethics, virtue-centred ethics, agent-based ethics, character ethics, Aristotelian ethics, and human nature ethics. The focus on pursuing a specific kind of perfection that necessitates adherence to virtues or character traits, sound judgment and moral motivations is a crucial component of rationality within virtue ethics.

Unlike utilitarianism and duty-based ethics, virtue theory emphasises the decision-maker's character more than the decision itself (Laczniak & Murphy, 2019). It highlights that a person's character, rather than just the analysis of the choice at hand, matters most in ethics. From this perspective, virtues are excellent behaviours acquired from observing and emulating good role models and mentors. Murphy (1999) identified honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and empathy as the five core virtues in the context of marketing. Murphy also showed how these qualities applied to managers across different nations and businesses. Research on virtue ethics in marketing has focused on its application to relationship marketing (Murphy et al., 2007). They linked the values of trust, dedication, and diligence to the three phases of relationship marketing: establishing, maintaining, and reinforcing.

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative research methodology to investigate the role of integrity in ethical social media marketing practices in Malaysian franchise businesses (Ugwu & Val, 2023). Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with six franchise firms, selected via purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives from experienced industry practitioners (Campbell et al., 2020). The interviews centred on participants' understanding and application of integrity-related principles, such as transparency, honesty, and responsibility, in their digital marketing strategies (Guest et al., 2006). The transcribed data were analysed using thematic analysis, which revealed key patterns and themes explaining how integrity influences brand credibility, cultural sensitivity, customer relationships, and consumer privacy in ethical social media marketing practices in Malaysian franchising (Ahmed et al., 2025; Rosairo, 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

Four themes have been identified: brand credibility, cultural practices, customer relationships, and consumer privacy.

4.1 Brand Credibility

In the Malaysian franchise sector, consumer trust and enduring loyalty are greatly influenced by brand reputation. Credibility develops through regular, open, and genuine online interaction, especially when social media is the primary medium for communication and marketing. Customers are more likely to trust franchise companies that maintain integrity in their digital content by avoiding overstated claims, disclosing sponsored content, and ensuring factual accuracy. Integrity-driven marketing builds emotional bonds that go beyond transactions by showing a brand's genuine commitment to fairness and honesty. As customers become more discerning, they look for brands that demonstrate ethical responsibility, especially in sectors where sustained success depends on reputation and consistency. Integrity strengthens

the legitimacy of franchise brands in ethical social media marketing by ensuring promotional messaging aligns with their operations and guiding principles. Franchise owners and marketers create a reliable digital environment when they follow moral principles, including protecting client privacy, giving accurate product information, and being open and honest about customer feedback. This approach safeguards the franchise's overall image across all locations while also improving brand reputation. Ultimately, by encouraging client retention, advocacy, and enduring business relationships grounded in honesty and accountability, integrating integrity into social media tactics enhances franchise sustainability.

4.2 Cultural and Practice

In Malaysia, cultural norms strongly influence ethical social media marketing among franchise businesses. The country's diverse environment fosters harmony, respect, and understanding, which naturally influence how brands interact with consumers online. Customers in Malaysia are receptive to messaging that reflects local cultural norms and values, such as community orientation, humility, and respect for others. Franchise companies can enhance emotional resonance and build a sense of community among viewers by weaving these cultural principles into their digital marketing content. Culturally aware ethical social media marketing shows respect for diversity while steering clear of contentious or offensive content that could damage the brand's reputation. A practical key to retaining cultural integrity in social media marketing is consistency between online messaging and actual brand behaviour. At every franchise location, owners must ensure their marketing strategies are fair, inclusive, and authentic. Social media specialists need training to understand local norms, languages, and sensitivities so advertisements connect effectively with different groups. For instance, highlighting local traditions or ethically celebrating multicultural festivals can boost engagement and brand trust. In Malaysia's socially diverse marketplace, franchise businesses may maintain harmony between local authenticity and global brand identity by integrating cultural respect and ethical practices. This will ultimately strengthen trust and cultivate enduring customer relationships.

4.3 Customer Relationship

To promote ethical social media marketing among Malaysian franchise businesses, customer relationships are essential. Sincerity, openness, and continuous communication across all digital platforms are essential for establishing and maintaining strong customer relationships. Franchise brands demonstrate integrity by acting ethically, providing accurate information, responding promptly to questions, and respectfully acknowledging customer feedback. Beyond boosting consumer trust, ethical social media interactions also build emotional loyalty, which is crucial for maintaining long-term business partnerships. Malaysian consumers value honesty and authenticity in digital interactions, and this cultural expectation pushes franchises to adopt ethical marketing strategies that demonstrate genuine concern for their clientele. In practice, ethical customer relationship management on social media includes proactive engagement, problem-solving, and community building. Franchise owners and marketers should prioritise meaningful encounters by handling complaints professionally and keeping client information private. Key tactics that build trust include providing post-purchase support, expressing gratitude through personalised messages, and maintaining transparency in product advertising. Franchise firms establish a human-centred and trustworthy relationship that promotes positive word-of-mouth and repeat business by integrating integrity into every digital touchpoint. Ultimately, integrity-driven ethical social media marketing turns client interactions into enduring alliances based on respect and shared values.

4.4 Consumer Privacy

A key aspect of ethical social media marketing for Malaysian franchise firms is consumer privacy. Protecting customers' personal information has become crucial to upholding credibility and trust as digital platforms gather more user data for targeted marketing. Ethical franchisees collect, store, and use client data transparently, with the client's consent. Franchise companies show honesty and regard for their customers by putting privacy protection first and abstaining from invasive data techniques. Customers in Malaysia are becoming more conscious of data security concerns and are more likely to support companies that manage personal data appropriately, especially those that make their privacy policies transparent. Protecting consumer privacy requires strict compliance with data protection legislation and secure digital infrastructure. Franchise businesses should develop standard operating protocols for collecting, sharing, and storing consumer information across all franchise locations. Transparency in data processing, combined with ethical marketing techniques such as permission-based advertising and confidentiality assurances, boosts client trust. Furthermore, offering explicit opt-in options, respecting unsubscribe requests, and avoiding overly personalised targeting are practical ways to maintain integrity. When customer privacy is prioritised as part of ethical social media marketing, franchise businesses not only meet legal requirements, but also create stronger, trust-based relationships that boost brand reputation and long-term viability.

Integrity is critical in building brand reputation through ethical social media marketing strategies (Chong & Patwa, 2023). When firms maintain honesty in their online communication by providing accurate product information, avoiding overstated claims, and refraining from publishing fraudulent testimonials, they increase consumer trust and brand authenticity. Transparent marketing messages improve trustworthiness and reinforce favourable brand associations, especially in competitive digital environments (Yang & Battocchio, 2021). Businesses that are transparent about their origins, manufacturing processes, or product quality, for example, often earn greater consumer trust, particularly among audiences who value ethical consumption, safety, and transparency (Holloway, 2024; Lee & Jin, 2019). Integrity is also a long-term strategic asset that protects brand reputation and customer loyalty. In the age of digital saturation, shoppers evaluate not just product performance but also the brand's moral character and ethical standards (Florea et al., 2025).

Businesses that reject deceptive marketing tactics, such as algorithm manipulation or fake reviews, demonstrate accountability and professionalism. This ethical consistency builds confidence and positions the brand as trustworthy, honest, and resilient amid changing market conditions (Celestin, 2024). Businesses must respect local values, social norms, and ethical concerns in order to be culturally and practically authentic in their social media marketing. Showing cultural understanding through polite, accurate, and modest commercial content demonstrates moral responsibility and social conscience (Behzadinasab et al., 2020). Ethical communication that avoids exploitation, harmful imagery, or cultural appropriation demonstrates an organisation's dedication to inclusivity and respect. Such techniques not only improve brand image but also help build societal trust and acceptance across diverse cultures (Kalogiannidis et al., 2025). Furthermore, authentic, sincere brand communication reflects practical integrity. Businesses that customise their marketing messaging to cultural values while emphasising empathy, teamwork, and community well-being engage in responsible marketing behaviour (Setiawati & Novrianto, 2025). In multicultural settings, such approaches can help bridge the gap between commerce and culture, ensuring that marketing content promotes peace rather than conflict. Integrity in cultural and practical dimensions elevates social media from a mere marketing tool to a forum for ethical participation and mutual respect (Kolawole Balogun & Aruoture, 2024).

Integrity is essential for developing and maintaining strong consumer relationships in the digital economy. Businesses that value honesty and transparency in their social media interactions, particularly when responding to criticism and complaints and clarifying promotional messaging, build meaningful trust with their customers (Dwivedi et al., 2021). When customers believe that a company is real and honest, they are more likely to engage favourably and develop long-term loyalty. Ethical integrity fosters the notion that customers are valued partners, not passive recipients of marketing messages (Açıkgöz et al., 2024; Valenzuela et al., 2010). Additionally, integrity fosters accountability in customer relationship management. When a company admits mistakes and transparently announces corrective steps, it demonstrates honesty and professionalism. This behaviour humanises the company and fosters emotional trust, potentially converting satisfied customers into advocates who freely support and promote the business (Gazi et al., 2024). Moreover, an integrity-based approach to relationship management improves client retention, positive word-of-mouth, and brand sustainability (Khalufi et al., 2025). Integrity in protecting consumer privacy is a key component of ethical social media marketing. Responsible businesses ensure that all consumer data is collected, stored, and used transparently and ethically (Bag et al., 2024). Clear communication about data use and consent builds customer trust and shows respect for individual autonomy (Yadav et al., 2024). In an age of pervasive data exploitation, maintaining openness and confidentiality reflects a company's moral and legal commitment to safeguarding its stakeholders (Ayaz et al., 2025). Beyond compliance, privacy integrity means fighting unethical data exploitation for economic advantage. Businesses that use consent-based marketing and engage exclusively with clients who have given explicit permission demonstrate respect for privacy and self-determination (Morić et al., 2024). This ethical approach is consistent with modern data protection rules and emphasises moral responsibility in digital participation. Protecting consumer privacy through integrity not only protects brand reputation but also increases customer loyalty, building trust as a critical differentiator in a data-driven economy (Morić et al., 2024).

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that integrity is essential in creating ethical social media marketing strategies among Malaysian franchise companies. Maintaining integrity through transparency, honesty, and responsibility boosts company credibility, builds customer connections, honours cultural values, and safeguards consumer privacy. These integrity-driven ideals help franchise firms build long-term trust and loyalty in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. The findings show that integrity-based ethical marketing not only strengthens brand reputation but also supports sustained business growth. When integrity is built into every digital encounter, franchise organisations can better maintain authenticity, manage consumer expectations responsibly, and align marketing efforts with moral and societal ideals. Despite its valuable insights, this study's tiny sample size of only six franchise companies limits the findings' applicability to the broader franchising market. Qualitative interviews may also reflect participants' subjective perspectives rather than objective indicators of integrity in practice. Future studies might broaden the sample to include more diverse franchise sectors, or use a mixed-methods approach to corroborate qualitative findings with quantitative data. Furthermore, cross-country comparative studies are recommended to investigate how cultural and legislative variables affect ethical social media marketing. Future research might also examine the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics on promoting or undermining integrity-based marketing practices across various digital platforms.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah for providing the infrastructure required to conduct this research.

Funding

The authors would like to thank Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) for funding this work under an internal grant RDU223407 (Social Sciences Research Grant).

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

M. Nur Aulia Fahada: Methodology; Analysis; Validation; Writing- original draft

A.A Nurul Ashykin: Methodology; Data Curation; Validation; Writing- review & revise

N. Ahmad Taufik: Conceptualisation; Validation; Writing- review & revise

Availability of Data and Materials

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request from the corresponding author.

Ethics Declarations

This study did not involve human participants or animals. Ethical approval was therefore not required.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Declarations

The authors claim that artificially intelligent-assisted technologies, such as generative AI, were not used to generate content, ideas, or theories. We used AI only to enhance readability and refine the language. We used it under strict human control and oversight. The authors take full responsibility for reviewing and approving the content.

References

- Abidin, C. (2018). *Internet celebrity: Understanding fame online*. Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/9781787560765>
- Açıkgöz, F. Y., Kayakuş, M., Zăbavă, B. Ștefania, & Kabas, O. (2024). Brand reputation and trust: The impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty for the Hewlett-Packard brand. *Sustainability*, 16(22), Article 9681. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16229681>
- Aguilar, N. R. S., Ongon, C. M. M., Samulde, H. G., Cleofe, B. M. S., Gerpacio, A. E., & Melo, M. C. F. (2022). Influence of social media marketing on the brand performance of the students' small online businesses. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 16(2), 876–886. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2022.16.2.1265>
- Agustian, K., Hidayat, R., Zen, A., Sekarini, R. A., & Malik, A. J. (2023). The influence of influencer marketing in increasing brand awareness and sales for SMEs. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(2), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v1i2.54>
- Ahmed, S. K., Mohammed, R. A., Nashwan, A. J., Ibrahim, R. H., Abdalla, A. Q., Ameen, B. M. M., et al. (2025). Using thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 6, Article 100198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2025.100198>
- Amegbe, H., Zungu, N. P., & Asamoah, E. S. (2023). How does SME social media adoption drive marketing performance? *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5(1), 1–17. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-ajims_v5_n1_a48
- Amoah, J., Belas, J., Dziwornu, R., & Khan, K. A. (2022). Enhancing SME contribution to economic development: A perspective from an emerging economy. *Journal of International Studies*, 15(2): 63-76. <https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2022/15-2/5>
- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48, 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>
- Ardiansyah, F., & Sarwoko, E. (2020). How social media marketing influences consumers purchase decision: A mediation analysis of brand awareness. *JEMA: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Akuntansi dan Manajemen*, 17(2), 156–168. <https://doi.org/10.31106/jema.v17i2.6916>
- Argyris, Y. A., Wang, Z., Kim, Y., & Yin, Z. (2020). The effects of visual congruence on increasing consumers' brand engagement: An empirical investigation of influencer marketing on Instagram using deep-learning algorithms for automatic image classification. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 112, Article 106443. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106443>
- Arjoon, S. (2000). Virtue theory as a dynamic theory of business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 28, 159–178. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006339112331>
- Audrezet, A., De Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.008>
- Ayaz, O., Tabaghdehi, S. A. H., Rosli, A., & Tambay, P. (2025). Ethical implications of employee and customer digital footprint: SMEs perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 188, Article 115088. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.115088>
- Bag, S., Srivastava, G., Gupta, S., Sivarajah, U., & Wilmot, N. V. (2024). The effect of corporate ethical responsibility on social and environmental performance: An empirical study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 117, 356–370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2024.01.016>
- Bamansoor, S., Saany, S. I. A., & El-Ebiary, Y. A. B. (2020). The S-commerce usage and acceptance modelling in Malaysia. *3C TIC: Cuadernos de Desarrollo Aplicados a las TIC*, 9(1), 99–115. <https://doi.org/10.17993/3ctic.2020.91.99-115>
- Behzadinasab, S., Andervazh, L., & Albonaiemi, E. (2020). Presenting model of ethical strategies based on social media marketing. *International Journal of Ethics & Society*, 2(3), 59–64. <https://doi.org/10.52547/ijethics.2.3.59>

- Capitello, R., Agnoli, L., Begalli, D., & Codurri, S. (2014). Social media strategies and corporate brand visibility in the wine industry: Lessons from an Italian case study. *EuroMed Journal of Business*, 9(2), 129–148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EMJB-10-2013-0046>
- Celestin, M. (2024). *Impact on brand trust and consumer behavior: Leveraging social media influencers to drive credibility and engagement across industries* [Preprint]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13887149>
- Chaudhary, M. U., Usman, S., Memon, M. A. M., & Farooq, U. (2023). The COVID-19's impact: Social media advertising and shift in consumer's purchase behavior in Pakistan. *Onomázein*, 60, 413–424.
- Chevalier, S. (2024). *Consumers buying directly on social media by age group 2023*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1273928/share-social-buyers-age-group-worldwide/>
- Chong, W. K., & Patwa, N. (2023). The value of integrity: Empowering SMEs with ethical marketing communication. *Sustainability*, 15(15), Article 11673. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151511673>
- Dahnil, M. I., Marzuki, K. M., Langgat, J., & Fabeil, N. F. (2014). Factors influencing SMEs adoption of social media marketing. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 119–126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.025>
- Dhiman, D. B. (2023). *Ethical issues and challenges in social media: A current scenario* [Preprint]. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4406610>
- Dubbelink, S. I., Herrando, C., & Constantinides, E. (2021). Social media marketing as a branding strategy in extraordinary times: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability*, 13(18), Article 10310. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810310>
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., et al. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, Article 102168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>
- Dyvik, E. H. (2023). *Global SMEs 2021*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1261592/global-smes/>
- Emini, A. (2021). Social media marketing and purchase intention: Evidence from Kosovo. *Ekonomika Misao i Praksa*, 30(2), 475–492. <https://doi.org/10.17818/EMIP/2021/2.8>
- Erwin, E., Ardyan, E., & Putra, S. D. (2022). Social media marketing trends: Influencers' accounts for SMEs product marketing. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting Research (IJEBAR)*, 6(3), 1949–1958. <https://doi.org/10.29040/ijebar.v6i3.6160>
- Florea, N.-V., Croitoru, G., & Diaconeasa, A.-A. (2025). The impact of integrity-related factors on consumer shopping intention: An interactive marketing approach based on the digital integrity model. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 20(4), Article 262. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer20040262>
- Gazi, M. A. I., Mamun, A. Al, Masud, A. Al, Senathirajah, A. R. bin S., & Rahman, T. (2024). The relationship between CRM, knowledge management, organisation commitment, customer profitability and customer loyalty in telecommunication industry: The mediating role of customer satisfaction and the moderating role of brand image. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 10(1), Article 100227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100227>
- Glonti, V., Manvelidze, R., & Surmanidze, I. (2021). The contribution of SME to regional economic development: On example of Adjara Autonomous Republic. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 10(1), 513. <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2021.v10n1p513>
- Gustavsson, A.-S., Suleman Nasir, A., & Ishonova, S. (2018). *Towards a world of influencers: Exploring the relationship building dimensions of influencer marketing*
- Hasim, M. A., Shahrin, M., Wahid, R. A., & Shamsudin, M. F. (2020). A review on media richness affecting purchase intention on Instagram: The mediating role of brand loyalty. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(7), 3894–3902. <https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V24I7/PR270386>
- He, L. (2021, July 7). Analysis: China is cracking down on data privacy. That's terrible news for some of its biggest tech companies. *CNN Business*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/07/07/tech/china-didi-data-tech-crackdown-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Holloway, S. (2024). *Exploring consumer trust in supply chain certifications and its impact on marketing effectiveness* [Preprint]. Preprints.org. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202406.1393.v1>
- Ishii, K., Lyons, M. M., & Carr, S. A. (2019). Revisiting media richness theory for today and future. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 1(2), 124–131. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.138>
- Jais, Z., Azmi, S. N. S., Nazim, S. N. A. M., & Izhar, N. I. (2023). The role of marketing ethics on product and promotion. *Journal of Business Innovation*, 8(1), 102. <https://doi.org/10.59298/INOSRHSS/2025/111.815>
- Jozani, M., Ayaburi, E., Ko, M., & Choo, K.-K. R. (2020). Privacy concerns and benefits of engagement with social media-enabled apps: A privacy calculus perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 107, Article 106260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106260>
- Kalogiannidis, S., Spithiropoulos, K., Chatzitheodoridis, F., Kalfas, D., & Kantzios, N. (2025). Communication ethics in business: Examining the role of ethical communication in building trust and sustainability. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies*, 8(3), 1770–1783. <https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v8i3.6885>
- Kamboj, S. (2020). Applying uses and gratifications theory to understand customer participation in social media brand communities: Perspective of media technology. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 32(1), 205–231. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-11-2017-0289>

- Keenan Gaylard, A. (2016). *Social media marketing adoption and usage within the Irish dairy sector* [Conference presentation]. Academy of Marketing Conference 2016, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom. <http://research.thea.ie/handle/20.500.12065/3294>
- Khalufi, N. A. M., Sheikh, R. A., Khan, S. M. F. A., & Onn, C. W. (2025). Evaluating the impact of sustainability practices on customer relationship quality: An SEM-PLS approach to align with SDG. *Sustainability*, 17(2), Article 798. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17020798>
- Koirala, S. (2019). *SMEs: Key drivers of green and inclusive growth* (OECD Green Growth Papers No. 2019/03). OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/8a51fc0c-en>
- Kolawole Balogun, S., & Aruoture, E. (2024). Cultural homogenization vs. cultural diversity: Social media's double-edged sword in the age of globalization. *Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 4. <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/AJSBS/article/view/2722>
- Krafft, M., Arden, C. M., & Verhoef, P. C. (2017). Permission marketing and privacy concerns—Why do customers (not) grant permissions? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 39(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2017.03.001>
- Laczniak, G. R., & Murphy, P. E. (2019). The role of normative marketing ethics. *Journal of Business Research*, 95, 401–407. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.036>
- Lee, J.-Y., & Jin, C.-H. (2019). The role of ethical marketing issues in consumer-brand relationship. *Sustainability*, 11(23), Article 6536. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11236536>
- Mason, A. N., Narcum, J., & Mason, K. (2021). Social media marketing gains importance after COVID-19. *Cogent Business & Management*, 8(1), Article 1870797. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1870797>
- Meral, K. Z. (2021). Strategic social media marketing and data privacy. In H. Dincer & S. Yüksel (Eds.), *Management strategies to survive in a competitive environment* (pp. 219–233). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72288-3_13
- Modreanu, A., & Toma, S.-G. (2023). A brief analysis of social media brand content and strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Annals of “Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu-Jiu, Economy Series*, 1, 234–239. https://www.utgjiu.ro/revista/ec/pdf/2023-01/28_Modreanu.pdf
- Mohamad, N. (2020). Understanding the influence of media richness in developing customer trust, commitment and loyalty. *Journal of Business and Social Development*, 8(2), 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.46754/jbsd.2020.09.003>
- Moran, G., Muzellec, L., & Johnson, D. (2020). Message content features and social media engagement: Evidence from the media industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 29(5), 533–545. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBm-09-2018-2014>
- Morić, Z., Dakic, V., Djekic, D., & Regvart, D. (2024). Protection of personal data in the context of e-commerce. *Journal of Cybersecurity and Privacy*, 4(3), 731–761. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcp4030034>
- Muda, S., & Musman, M. (2022). *SMEs in Malaysia: History and development*. Buletin FPN. <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/68417/>
- Murphy, P. E. (1999). Character and virtue ethics in international marketing: An agenda for managers, researchers and educators. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 18, 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006072413165>
- Murphy, P. E., Laczniak, G. R., & Wood, G. (2007). An ethical basis for relationship marketing: A virtue ethics perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(1/2), 37–57. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710718102>
- Musa, H., Ab Rahim, N., Azmi, F. R., Shibghatullah, A. S., & Othman, N. A. (2016). Social media marketing and online small and medium enterprises performance: Perspective of Malaysian small and medium enterprises. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 6(7), 1–5.
- Nurjaman, K. (2021). MSMEs marketing strategy with the use of social media in the COVID-19 pandemic era. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 3(4), 203–211.
- Parveen, F., Jaafar, N. I., & Ainin, S. (2015). Social media usage and organisational performance: Reflections of Malaysian social media managers. *Telematics and Informatics*, 32(1), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2014.03.001>
- Pelletier, M. J., Krallman, A., Adams, F. G., & Hancock, T. (2020). One size doesn't fit all: A uses and gratifications analysis of social media platforms. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 14(2), 269–284. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-10-2019-0159>
- Pennington, N. (2021). Communication outside of the home through social media during COVID-19. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 4, Article 100118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2021.100118>
- Puriwat, W., & Tripopsakul, S. (2021). The role of viral marketing in social media on brand recognition and preference. *Emerging Science Journal*, 5(6), 855–867. <https://doi.org/10.28991/esj-2021-01315>
- Rao, A. (2021). *Ethical issues with social media business practices: Motivation, consequences, and character formation* [Unpublished manuscript]. Texas A&M University. <https://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/194887>
- Rehman, I. (2019). Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data harvesting: What you need to know. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1–11. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2497>
- Rosairo, H. S. R. (2023). Thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences – Sri Lanka*, 18(3). <https://doi.org/10.4038/jas.v18i3.10526>
- Rousselet, E., Brial, B., Cadario, R., & Béji-Bécheur, A. (2020). Moral intensity, issue characteristics, and ethical issue recognition in sales situations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 163(2), 347–363. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-4020-1>

- Setiawati, I. B., & Novrianto, L. M. (2025). The impact of authenticity in key opinion leaders branding communication. *Dialogika: Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi dan Sosialisasi*, 1(3), 282–293. <https://doi.org/10.62383/dialogika.v1i3.590>
- Shams Vala, A., Moosavi, S. S., & Jafari Baghiabadi, S. (2022). Effective knowledge transfer: Application of the media richness theory. *Informology*, 1(2), 41–56.
- Shi, N. P., & Ismail, S. N. (2021). Social media influences on purchase intention among youth in Malaysia. *Research in Management of Technology and Business*, 2(1), 259–272. <https://periodical.uthm.edu.my/index.php/rmtb/article/view/1826>
- Stiadi, M., Qomariah, N., Kumalasari, D. A., Khusniyah, K., & Ambarwati, R. (2023). Harnessing social media platforms as integral components of business marketing strategies in the digital age: A case study within the e-commerce industry. *International Journal of Economic Literature*, 1(2), 111–121. <https://wikip.net/index.php/IJEFE/article/view/888/718>
- Sudirjo, F., Anam, C., & Pranawukir, I. (2023). Exploring the impact of social media on online marketing strategies in the era of information technology: Challenges and opportunities in anticipation of the new year. *Jurnal Minfo Polgan*, 12(2), 2485–2492. <https://doi.org/10.33395/jmp.v12i2.13300>
- Tajudeen, F. P., Jaafar, N. I., & Ainin, S. (2018). Understanding the impact of social media usage among organisations. *Information & Management*, 55(3), 308–321. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2017.08.004>
- Thanh, N. N., Tung, P. H., Thu, N. H., Kien, P. D., & Nguyet, N. A. (2021). Factors affecting the share of fake news about COVID-19 outbreak on social networks in Vietnam. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 7(3), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2137179t>
- Ugwu, C. N., & Val, E. (2023). Qualitative research. *IDOSR Journal of Computer and Applied Sciences*, 8(1), 20–35. <https://www.idosr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/IDOSR-JCAS-8120-35-2023.docx.pdf>
- Valenzuela, L. M., Mulki, J. P., & Jaramillo, J. F. (2010). Impact of customer orientation, inducements and ethics on loyalty to the firm: Customers' perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93(2), 277–291. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0220-z>
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540>
- Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: Extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(1), 157–178. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41410412>
- Vidani, J., Meghrajani, D. I., & Das, S. (2023). Unleashing the power of influencer marketing: A study on millennial consumer behaviour and its key antecedents. *Journal of Education, Rabindra Bharati University*, 25(6), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.56976/RJSI.V5I2.119>
- Vithayathil, J., Dadgar, M., & Osiri, J. K. (2020). Social media use and consumer shopping preferences. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54, Article 102117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102117>
- Voronov, A. A., Gorlachev, P. V., Mirzoeva, E. V., Rudenko, V. A., & Popova, T. S. (2021). Role of social and ethical marketing in improving sustainable business development. In *Cooperation and sustainable development* (pp. 1249–1255). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77000-6_145
- Wang, Y., Cheney, G., & Roper, J. (2016). Virtue ethics and the practice–institution schema: An ethical case of excellent business practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 138, 67–77. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24755815>
- Wang, Z., & Kim, H. G. (2017). Can social media marketing improve customer relationship capabilities and firm performance? Dynamic capability perspective. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 39(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2017.02.004>
- Xikmatovna, M. M. (2023). The impact of social media on marketing strategies. *EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)*, 10(3), 67–69. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra1013>
- Yadav, T. C., Kala, K., Kolachina, R. I. R., Kanneganti, M. C., & Pasupuleti, S. S. (2024). Data privacy concerns and their impact on consumer trust in digital marketing. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management*, 8(11), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijssrem38555>
- Yang, J., & Battocchio, A. F. (2021). Effects of transparent brand communication on perceived brand authenticity and consumer responses. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 30(8), 1176–1193. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2020-2803>