Study of Social Media Marketing of A Local Snack Brand Toward Brand Authenticity and its Impact on Brand Preference

Sherly Theresia [1], Ferdi Antonio [2]

Abstract :

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in national economic growth. Many SMEs in Indonesia produce packaged snacks, but not many of them use social media marketing effectively. This study aimed to examine the influence of the elements of social media marketing (SMM), which consist of attractiveness, trendiness, interaction, customization, information clarity on brand authenticity, and its impact on consumer preference, particularly on local snack brands produced by SMEs. The research model was modified from previous research and empirically tested with data from consumers of the local snack brand who viewed its Instagram social media in Indonesia. This research was carried out by a quantitative survey with cross-sectional data. Respondent data was taken purposively with a questionnaire instrument. A total of 210 respondents met the requirements and the data was analyzed through PLS-SEM. The results showed that the six antecedents of brand authenticity from social media marketing were found to have a significant and positive influence. Predominantly influence was found in trendiness and attractiveness content, Brand authenticity demonstrated a significant direct impact on brand preference and mediated the SMM to brand preference. The findings of this study also show that brand authenticity can be adequately measured by its four dimensions, namely symbolism, continuity, integrity, and credibility. Further, this study encourages the local snack brands which are produced mostly by small and medium enterprises to pay attention to their branding, whereas SMEs can utilize brand authenticity as a differentiating tool.

Keywords: Brand authenticity, brand preference, social media marketing, SME, and local snack brands.

1. Introduction

Many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, currently produce local snack brands which are produced by involving local resources. Snacking habits have become part of the habits of many people, especially for the youth. Snacking can be a social activity, with friends often sharing snacks during study sessions, hangouts, or other social gatherings (Mankad & Gokhale, 2023). The uptrends in snack consumption may also be influenced by popular culture and media. They are already at the stage of branding their production through digital platforms. Digital marketing has now become a necessity in marketing practice (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Malarvizhi et al., 2022). With so many brands available in the market, there is competition between these brands and they even have to compete with big brands marketed by large-scale companies.

---
[1] *Doctoral Program in Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Jakarta, Indonesia.*
sherly.theresia@yahoo.com
[2] *Doctoral Program in Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Jakarta, Indonesia*

To win in competition between the local brands, SMEs need to identify their target market and establish a marketing strategy that makes consumers choose a brand (Dubbelink et al., 2021; Zahara et al., 2023; Zarei et al., 2021). Here consumer loyalty is the ultimate goal that is very decisive. However, loyalty is also based on the stage at which consumers determine their choice of a brand. This is relevant to the condition that consumers use many products and are not fixated on just one brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Therefore, marketers need to study what factors can drive brand preference in the context of local snack brands, this is necessary to strengthen domestic SMEs.

Brand preference is a marketing metric that can reflect a local or domestic brand's strength in the market (Al Adwan, 2019; Vongurai, 2020). This indicator shows whether consumers prefer a particular brand over other brands from the same category (Cop & Astekin, 2022). When consumers consistently choose one brand over another, this is called brand preference. In other words, consumers are familiar with the existing brand choices, perhaps even trying several products with different brands. Brand preference goes hand in hand with loyalty, when faced with a decision, customers with certain brand preferences will choose the brand that is their main choice first (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The business performance of SMEs particularly in SMEs that produce snack brand depends on marketing. They need to create brand differentiation in this digital era. The branding efforts will lead to consumer choice and loyalty, which in turn helps SMEs achieve successful and sustainable business (Dubbelink et al., 2021). Brand preference, like brand loyalty, will not be formed overnight. This branding effort was developed over time and consistently (Fritz et al., 2017; Jian et al., 2019)

The SMEs need to build positive emotional relationships between brands and consumers, this can be developed through brand authenticity. Previous literature (Chen et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2017; Jian et al., 2019; Ok, & Hyun, 2017) indicates that brand authenticity can be a differentiator or differentiate the superiority of one brand over another brand. Brand authenticity can be defined as consumers' perceptions of the extent to which they can consider a brand to have an authentic character, fulfill its promises, be honest with its consumers, and support consumers' being realistic about themselves (Morhart et al., 2015). Especially in the digital era where information or promotions on social media platforms tend to be excessive, tendentious and do not always provide correct information.

Therefore, this research begins with the assumption that brand authenticity can influence the brand preference of a snack brand in the domestic market. Furthermore, if brand authenticity can influence consumer choices, how does this happen? Therefore, the dimensions of brand authenticity need to be studied in depth concerning previous research. Marketing experts have different opinions regarding the dimensions of brand authenticity (Bruhn et al., 2012; Moulard et al., 2020; Fritz et al., 2017). Studies suggest the use of dimensions to understand brand authenticity according to the consumer context and product category.

Morhart et al. (2015) recommend dimensions of brand authenticity from four points of view namely; symbolism, continuity, integrity, and credibility. These dimensions involve emotional relationships and manifestations of social status in the form of symbolic consumption as stated by Holbrook and Hirschman (1992). This is considered relevant because the habit of snacking among the youth and SME brands fits with consumer socialization activities. From the continuity dimension, consumers can be assured that this product is made and processed in good quality, moreover proven to last a long time on the market with a good reputation, so it is worthy of being a choice. The integrity and credibility dimensions emphasize that the company looks at the interests of consumers, society, and the environment. Through these four dimensions, consumers will get the message that SMEs are not

only looking for profit but are willing to build relationships with their consumers. With these considerations, this research refers to the four dimensions recommended by Morhart et al. (2015)

Previous research has explored consumer responses to digital marketing strategies using the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model (Cheung et al., 2021; Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2021) to support previous research in the field of digital marketing. This research uses the S-O-R model as a theoretical basis for the research conceptual framework (research model). The concept of social media marketing activities (SMMA) was developed by Kim and Ko (2012) where SMMA consists of multi-dimensions. To date, many studies are extending social media marketing (SMM) in the context of branding on social media platforms (Dubbelink et al., 2021). This research will focus on the social media Instagram managed by SMEs for their local snack brands.

Through the proposed research model, this research aims to find out which SMM elements play predominantly in triggering consumers' cognitive and emotional responses to perceive brand authenticity. The S-O-R theory developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) states that stimuli or stimuli related to the environment and brands can influence consumers' emotions and thoughts, which in turn will determine their actual behavior. In this research, the stimulus was social media marketing content that is posted or broadcast on Instagram's social media account as antecedents. Further, brand authenticity becomes a direct predictor of brand preference. There are many approaches to measuring SMM (Dubbelink et al., 2021). However, this research modified six elements that are considered more relevant in explaining SMM namely attractiveness, trendiness, interaction, customization, information clarity, and influencer role which was expected to be more relevant.

Following the background of the problems and gaps identified in the existing literature on branding, as well as considering the influence of SMM elements on consumer behavior in perceiving brand authenticity, this research generally aims to analyze SMM empirically in the context of the local snack brand in Indonesia. The objective underlying the research was formulated as follows: To identify and test the role of each SMM element in influencing the formation of consumer perceptions of brand authenticity. Further, to test the impact of brand authenticity on brand preference. This research offers a new contribution in the form of a nexus between SMMs on Instagram social media and the brand authenticity of local brands produced by SMEs. The findings from this research will provide insight for SMEs to make more use of marketing via social media.

2. Theoretical Background

This research uses the basis of two major theories as a theoretical framework, namely the stimulus-response theory (S-O-R) (Mehrabian & Russell (1974), and Consumer Based-Brand Equity theories (CBBE) (Keller,1993) theories. This theory is well-known and used in marketing research, especially concerning consumer behavior (Jacoby, 2002). The S-O-R continuum model as a theoretical basis states that certain characteristics of an environment or stimulus (stimulus) can arouse consumers' emotional and cognitive responses, and then encourage their decisions to behave in certain ways (Jacoby, 2002). Therefore, this research follows the stimulus theory that marketing activities on social media or social media marketing (SMM) received by consumers can be seen as a particular form of stimulation. Continuous exposure to consumers from a brand's social media can influence consumer decisions. In this context, consumer evaluation of brands is considered as an organism (something that is 'living and changing') and refers to cognitive and affective responses and conditions as a result of the experience of consuming social media content or marketing. Meanwhile, the outcome is

behavior or the stage of intention to behave that supports the performance of a particular brand, which is related to CBBE theory (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In marketing literature, the theory that has received a lot of attention and is used today is Consumer Based-Brand Equity (CBBE) which was developed by Keller (1993). So far, many of the advantages of products that have brand equity are known, including that the product can survive a long life cycle and has many loyal consumers (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In the brand equity pyramid, there are two important stages in consumer response, namely customer judgment and customer feeling. What is meant by customer judgment refers to the assessment of a brand, in the form of consumers' subjective opinions and evaluations of a brand (Keller, 1993). Meanwhile, customer feeling is a form of feeling towards a brand, as a customer's emotional response and reaction to the brand when driven by the environment (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

In CBBE theory, a positive consumer response to a brand will culminate in the peak stage of the pyramid called brand resonance, at this stage consumers tend to become loyal in long-term relationships (Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Empirical research from Koay et al. (2020) shows that social media marketing can have an influence on brand equity through individual subjective responses. In this research, the highest stage in brand equity, namely loyalty, is reflected as consumer preferences in choosing a brand from among other brands (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Social media marketing (SMM) or marketing via social media is defined as a dynamic and interactive process in which companies create, communicate, and provide online offers through social media platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). SMM is used to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders which can increase benefits for stakeholders by facilitating interactive relationships, sharing information, providing recommendations, and delivering personalized promotional messages. Furthermore, this definition is also associated primarily with electronic word of mouth (EWOM), the creation of word of mouth among stakeholders about existing and trending products (Al Adwan, 2019; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Attractive content refers to how consumers perceive visually appealing social media content (Godey et al., 2016). Consumers can enjoy SMM more by watching videos rather than just reading text, or participating in games to get prizes. SMM activities like this can build relationships with brands (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). According to Seo and Park (2018), attractiveness is a vital aspect of SMM in building brand equity. Research by Aggarwal and Mittal, (2022) shows that a brand's social media content that is interactive, likable, and capable of providing entertainment will produce high brand value. Previous research findings (Malarvizhi et al., 2022) show that the influence of the appeal of entertaining content can have a positive effect on brand equity. Therefore, in the context of marketing via the social media Instagram of a local snack brand, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Attractiveness has a positive influence on brand authenticity.

Trendiness can be defined as a brand providing the latest (updated) content about products and services on social media according to consumer needs (Godey et al., 2016). According to Yadav and Rahman (2018), social media users want a brand to provide product displays that are in line with modern trends and styles, especially hedonic products. Previous research (Seo & Park, 2018: Malarvizhi et al. (2022) revealed the significant influence of trendiness on branding which is important in the brand promotion process. In addition, through social media content, consumers become aware of the products being used by other consumers and obtain information according to

the latest trends (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Efforts to update content on social media can positively influence consumers' minds that a brand is dynamic, appears current, and follows the trends, this is known to contribute to brand loyalty (Zarei et al., 2021). In line with this thought, in the context of marketing via social media Instagram, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Trendiness has a positive influence on brand authenticity

Interaction on social media shows the extent to which a brand's SMM can provide or facilitate interaction. In particular, interactions between brands and consumers, and consumer-to-consumer, to exchange opinions and information (Dessart et al., 2015). Consumers contribute to brands' social media by interacting and sharing ideas with other consumers who share the same views to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of a product (Schivinski et al., 2019). Strong consumer engagement via SMM contributes to strong brand building (France et al., 2016). Increasing consumer-brand interaction will increase consumers' ability to understand the brand as part of branding (Schivinski et al., 2019). Research by Zarei et al. (2021) reports that interactive marketing via social networking platforms can have a major impact on brand equity. Furthermore, Malarvizhi et al. (2022) also demonstrated that interactivity elements in SMM have a positive influence on brand image. Thus, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Interaction has a positive influence on brand authenticity

Customization discusses how far a product or service can meet consumer needs and preferences according to its uniqueness (Cheung et al., 2020; Seo & Park, 2018). Customizable or tailored SMMs can influence the formation of consumers' cognitive and affective experiences towards a brand resulting in their preference for a particular brand when making purchasing decisions (Dolan et al., 2021; Cheung et al., 2020). Empirical research (Seo & Park, 2018) found that customization as an SMM element has a strong influence on brand equity. These findings are also supported by the research results of Malarvizhi et al. (2022) where customization on social media has a positive effect on brand image and brand awareness. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Customization has a positive influence on brand authenticity

Content marketing provides information to consumers according to the consumer's needs and desires (Keller, 2003). For consumers, the information must be clear, unambiguous, and easy to understand and will help purchase decisions (Li, 2021). For a long time, marketers have believed that content that conveys information that is relevant to what consumers are looking for, can stimulate consumer awareness and attitudes toward products (Oliver & Rust, 1997). Through clear information, consumers will have positive associations with the brand and thereby increase their supportive attitudes towards the brand (Kumar et al., 2013; Moulard et al., 2020). This means that the more brand information the content on social media contains, and the more clearly the content is understood, the easier it is for consumers to understand the brand identity. Empirical research by Chen et al. (2021) indicates that quality information can prevent consumers from prejudice and misunderstanding and encourage consumers' understanding of the brand. Thus, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Clarity has a positive influence on brand authenticity

Freberg et al. (2022) describe social media influencers as a new role supporting independent third parties who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other uses of social media. Another term that has been used to describe them is advocates for brands to gain public recognition (McCracken 1989). Social media influencers are usually ordinary individuals who have created unique characters on online platforms that have come to be loved by their audiences and have

achieved high visibility among their followers. by creating viral content on social media (Garcia 2017). Previous research (Munnukka et al., 2016) shows that influencers will influence followers' trust in a brand's posts. Influencers can bring informative and enjoyable content to audiences, including information about brands, and will positively influence consumer's positive perceptions (Yang et al. 2021). An empirical study by Lou & Yuan (2019) shows that influencers can create consumer trust in a brand's content on social media. Therefore, this research proposes a hypothesis
H6: Influencer has a positive influence on brand authenticity

Brand authenticity represents the brand proposition for consumers who desire brand authenticity in a market flooded with indistinguishable products and brands (Arnold & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Vongurai, 2020). According to Bruhn et al. (2012), brand authenticity positively influences consumer responses to brand stimuli. Consumers tend to choose products that are felt to have more authenticity and therefore have an important role in branding (Napoli et al., 2016; Moulard et al., 2020). Higher symbolic and emotional attachments to brands are considered to have an authentic image that will influence consumer choices (Vongurai, 2020). If a brand is considered authentic then consumers' responses to that brand will positively influence consumers' behavioral intentions towards that brand (Oh et al., 2019; Pittman et al., 2021). Previous research found that brand authenticity has a significant positive influence on brand preference (Cop & Astekin, 2022). That research was also supported by research findings from Yang et al. (2021) which specifically shows that social media such as Instagram can have a positive influence on brand authenticity. With these considerations in mind, in the context of marketing via Instagram social media this research proposes the following hypothesis:
H7: Brand authenticity has a positive impact on brand preference.

From the description of the hypothesis explained above, a conceptual framework can be depicted in Figure 1. as follows
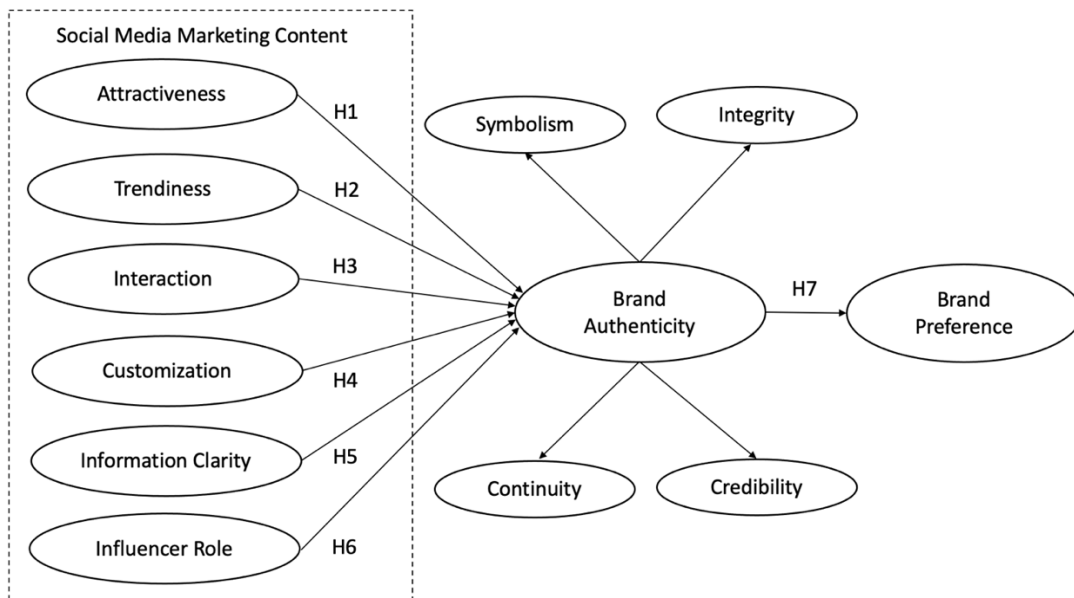

Figure1 . Conceptual Framework

From Figure 1, it can be seen that there were seven hypotheses proposed in this research which will be tested empirically from the data survey with six independent variables and brand preference as a dependent variable.

3. Methodology

This research is a quantitative survey research where data is obtained cross-sectionally. The unit of analysis is individuals, namely consumers of local snack brands who have also seen Instagram content from the particular brand in 2023. Local snack brands in this research are packaged snacks, namely chips and crackers produced by SMEs in Bandung and Jakarta. The criteria for a local snack brand are that the business has been running for more than five years, is registered with the Food and Drug Control Centre, and has an active social media account. The target population of the research was consumers of local snack brands produced by SMEs while samples were taken purposively. The minimum number of samples was obtained by power analysis using GPower®.

Indicator for authenticity adopted from Morhart et al., (2015). This variable consists of four dimensions which in this study were measured together as one factor. Brand preference is measured using indicators from research by Voss et al. (2003) while the added variable, namely clarity, was measured using a scale from the research of Algesheimer et al. (2004) and the Influencer variable was measured using a scale from Ryu and Han (2021). Following the recommendation (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020) the measurement used is a Likert Scale of 1 - 6 with responses to statements ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The data collection instrument uses Gform® which was distributed online in October 2023. The questionnaire adopted from English was translated by professionals and priorly tested for content validity by an expert panel consisting of three academics and two marketing practitioners.

This quantitative research uses multivariate data analysis (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020) with the Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method due to the causal-predictive oriented and the proposed model complexity (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS4® software was carried out through two mandatory stages. First is the outer model to ensure the reliability and validity of the indicators in the model (Hair et al., 2022). The second stage is the inner model evaluation or structural model to assess the significance of the relationship between variables. At the structural assessment, bootstrapping was done with 10.000 resamples, an alpha of 5% with one-tailed testing.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

From the questionnaire distribution, 210 respondents met the requirements. The profile of respondents can be seen in Table 1. where the majority of respondents are young consumers who reside in Jakarta.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Description	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 - 30 Year	126	60
	31 - 40 Year	61	29
	> 40 year	23	11
	Total	**210**	**100**
Gender	Female	123	59
	Male	87	41

Description	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
	Total	**210**	**100**
Education	High School	19	9
	Diploma	25	12
	Under Graduate	119	57
	Graduate	47	22
	Total	**210**	**100**
Domicile	Greater Jakarta	162	77
	Others	48	23
	Total	**210**	**100**
Occupation	Housewife	29	14
	Employee	61	29
	Entrepreneur	31	15
	Freelance/part time	21	10
	Students	42	20
	Professional	18	9
	Others	8	4
	Total	**210**	**100**

Source : Data processed (2023)

At the outer model or measurement model analysis stage, the first step is to assess indicator reliability with the expected outer loading above 0.708. As recommended by Hair et al. (2022) loading values below 0.7 but above 0.5 can be retained if they do not interfere with the average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability values. Moreover, if the indicator has information value and if it is removed it will disrupt the content validity of the respective variable. In this model, several indicators must be eliminated, namely ICL3 from information clarity, and Bacon2, Bacre3, and Baint3 from brand authenticity. After eliminating the four indicators, a reliable and valid outer model was obtained. In this model, all Cronbach Alpha values were found to be above 0.7 and all AVE values were above 0.5 as required. The outer model with confirmed indicators can be seen in Figure 2.
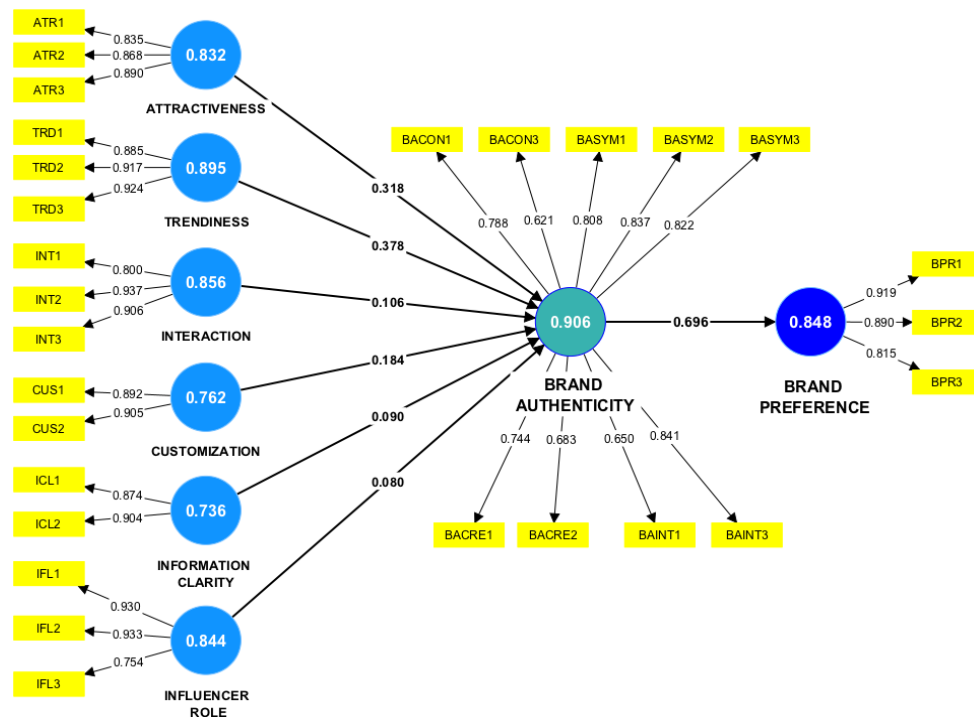
Figure 2. The Outer Model (Measurement Model)
Source : Data processed (2023)

Discriminant validity testing was carried out using the Heterotrait Monotrait ratio (HTMT) approach as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). The results can be seen in the Table 2, no HTMT value was found above 0.9, thus it can be said that all latent variable indicators in this model have been discriminated well. Each indicator is most appropriate when used to measure its respective variable. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value found slightly below 0.08 shows the model fit. From the outer model evaluation, it can be ascertained that the model has reliable and valid indicators to reflect the latent variables.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Variable	ATR	BAU	BPR	CUS	IFL	ICL	INT
Attractiveness (ATR)							
Brand Authenticity (BAU)	0,840						
Brand Preference (BPR)	0,748	0,776					
Customization (CUS)	0,790	0,871	0,618				
Influencer Role (IFL)	0,502	0,643	0,814	0,544			
Information Clarity (ICL)	0,654	0,719	0,504	0,882	0,345		
Interaction (INT)	0,724	0,762	0,664	0,738	0,483	0,628	
Trendiness (TRD)	0,489	0,817	0,608	0,581	0,635	0,458	0,555

Source : Data processed (2023)

In the structural model or inner model evaluation, value. It was found that the inner VIF (Variance Inflation Factors), value was below 5, thus it could be said that there were no collinearity problems found in the model (Hair et al., 2022).
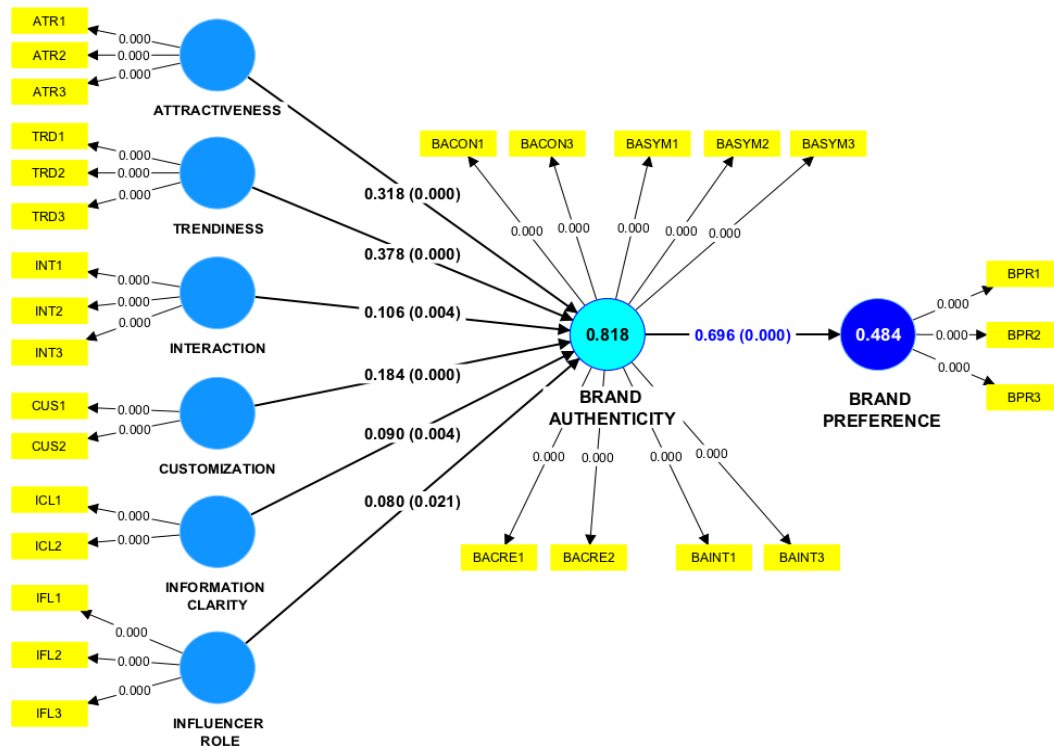

Figure 2 The Inner Model (Structural Model)

Source : Data processed (2023)

The coefficient determinant indicates the model has moderate explanatory power for brand preference (R^2=0.484), however, it was classified as having strong explanatory power for the brand authenticity construct (R^2=0.818). That R^2 value is also related to the fact that there was only one path to the dependent variable, but based on f^2 this influence, it has a large effect size (f^2=0,940). For out-of-sample testing, this model is known to have medium predictive relevance (Q^2_predict=0.497). Therefore, this model confirms that brand authenticity can be considered adequate for predicting brand preference.

In the inferential hypothesis testing it was found that the seven hypotheses proposed could be declared supported. This is supported by p-value data which is below 0.05. Furthermore, no value of 0 was found in the range of a confidence interval of 95% (CI) so it could be said that the seven hypotheses were significant. From the standardized coefficient data, it was found that all hypotheses were positive, hence it could be said to have a positive direction that conforms to the direction of the one-tailed hypothesis. Therefore there was sufficient evidence to state that the hypothesis is supported.

The coefficient data shows that the influence of brand authenticity on brand preference was 0.696 this shows a positive impact as expected. while from the independent variables, the greatest influence was found from trendiness, followed by attractiveness and customization. Meanwhile, a relatively weak influence was found from information clarity and influencer role. However, all the paths in the model

have f^2 above 0.02 which confirms the effect size of the independent variables. These findings show that in the context of local snack brand SMM, the most important thing to pay attention to is the SMM which is able to provide trendy and attractive content. The more updated or trendy the content, the stronger the consumer's perception of brand authenticity from local brands. Therefore, these findings show that appropriate content for consumers will shape their perception of brand authenticity.

Table 2 Hypotheses Test Result

	Hypotheses	Standardized Coefficient	P-Value	CI 5.0%	CI 95.0%	Result	f^2
H1	Attractiveness -> Brand Authenticity	0.318	0.000	0.241	0.395	Hypotheses Supported	0.273
H2	Trendiness -> Brand Authenticity	0.378	0.000	0.310	0.440	Hypotheses Supported	0.456
H3	Interaction -> Brand Authenticity	0.106	0.004	0.040	0.170	Hypotheses Supported	0.031
H4	Customization -> Brand Authenticity	0.184	0.000	0.112	0.247	Hypotheses Supported	0.074
H5	Information Clarity -> Brand Authenticity	0.090	0.004	0.036	0.146	Hypotheses Supported	0.023
H6	Influencer Role -> Brand Authenticity	0.080	0.021	0.021	0.151	Hypotheses Supported	0.023
H7	Brand Authenticity -> Brand Preference	0.696	0.000	0.645	0.750	Hypotheses Supported	0.940

Source : Data processed (2023)

To obtain managerial implications precisely, an assessment was carried out using importance-performance mapping (IPMA) on PLS-SEM as suggested by Hair et al. (2022). From the IPMA analysis using the average value of performance and total effect, two horizontal and vertical lines were drawn which form four quadrants. The priority is the bottom right quadrant because this shows what was important in the eyes of consumers whereas was considered not yet performing by consumers, so it needs to be prioritized. In this quadrant indicator ATR3 follows ATR1 can be seen, these two indicators reflect the attractiveness variable. Hence these two indicator needs to be improved. It can be seen that attractiveness is considered the most important but is not yet what consumers expect. This provides the input for digital marketing to improve and upload content that is interesting and can emotionally entertain consumers. From this IPMA picture, it is known that the trendiness indicator (TRD1) is the most important indicator. On the other hand, this indicator is placed in the upper right quadrant, which shows that it was well performed according to consumers' views. This can be positive feedback where local snack brand marketers need to maintain social media content that is already considered trendy by consumers.
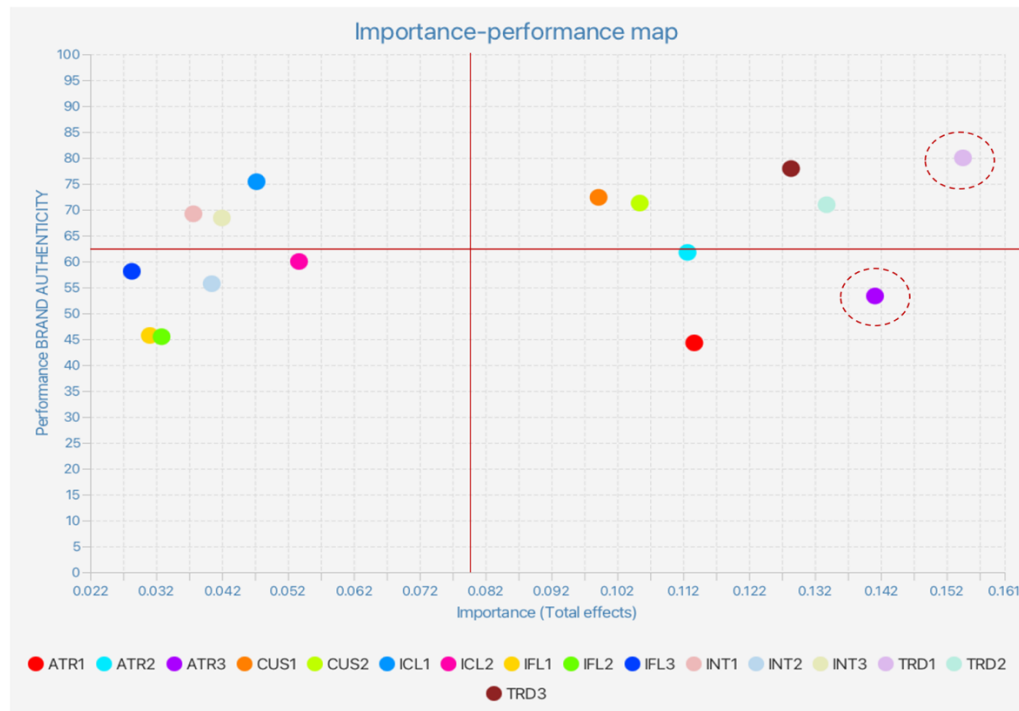
Figure 3. IPMA Indicator

Source : Data processed (2023)

5. Discussion

The results of the analysis of this research model using PLS-SEM produced an empirical model as can be seen in Figure 4. This research aims to analyze the influence of social media marketing content on brand authenticity and its impact on brand preference in the context of local brands. Respondents are consumers of local snack brands who have also seen marketing content on the brand's Instagram account. The seven hypotheses proposed can be concluded to be supported based on data analysis. The findings of this research confirm the stimulus theory or S-O-R from Mehrabian and Russell (1974) which is applied in social media marketing (Kim & Ko, 2012) where stimulus from social media marketing can influence consumer responses. Further, customer interaction is enhanced via SMM as mentioned in an earlier study (Dwivedi et al., 2021).
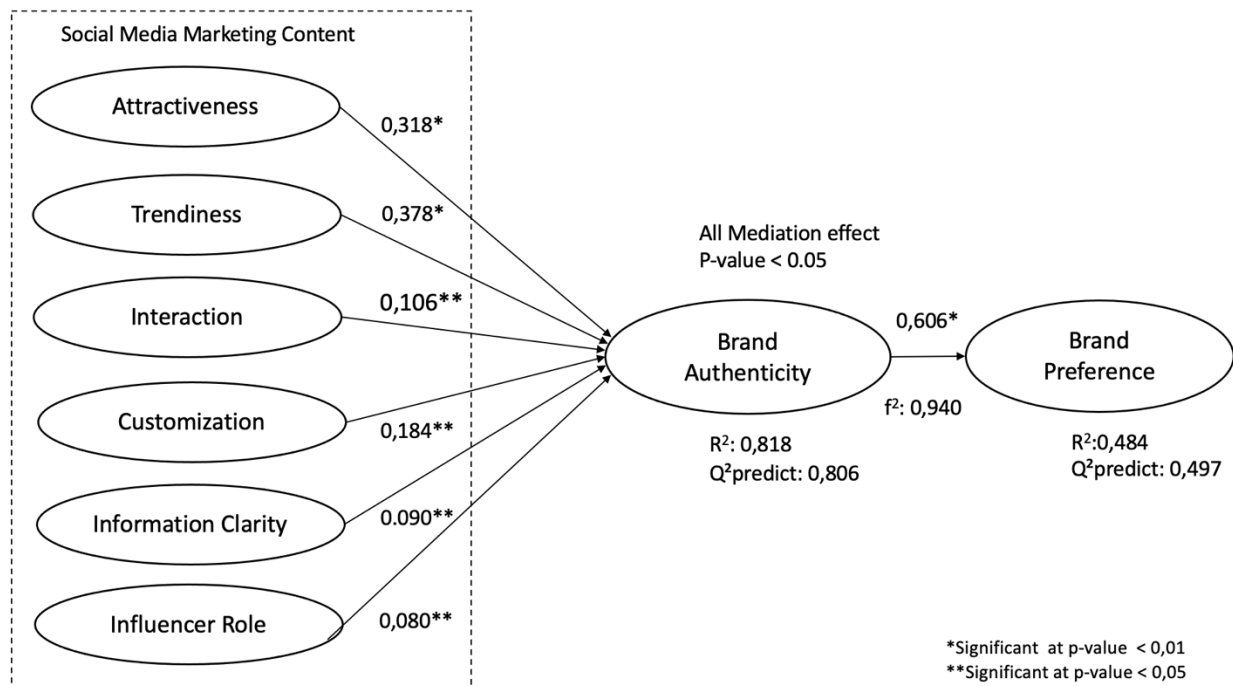
Figure 4. Empirical Model

Source : Data processed (2023)

The findings of this research are in line with previous research where attractive and trendy content has a positive influence on product branding. For example, research done by Sharma et al. (2022). The results of this research show that social media marketing, with elements of trendiness, interactivity, and others, has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Likewise, the findings of this research are in line with findings from previous research (Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Aggarwal & Mittal, 2022) that the five components of SMM, namely entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customization, and EWOM can influence brand awareness, brand image and finally brand loyalty.

Research related to SMM (social media marketing) generally departs from the concept that was developed by Kim and Ko (2012). Differently, this research uses six SMM elements, instead of the five in the original version. The results of this research also open up opportunities for researchers to continue developing SMM that is more relevant to the dynamics of changing online consumer behavior. The findings of this research provide new contributions by modifying and adding two variables, namely information clarity and replacing EWOM with an influencer role which was found significant. Branding on social media where there is a lot of noise originating from audience comments should provide information that supports a good impression, and a clear and consistent message about the brand. This can reduce consumer misunderstandings and negative prejudices towards the brand. The findings of this research show evidence that information clarity and influencer role have a significant positive influence on the branding process and enhance consumer perceptions of authentic brands.

This research shows consistent results with previous research that brand authenticity can have a significant positive influence on brand preference (Cop & Astekin, 2022). The empirical findings also support the findings of previous research from Yang et al. (2021) which specifically shows that social

media such as Instagram can have a positive influence on brand authenticity. Trendy and attractive visual content on social media was specifically found to have a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions nowadays. Furthermore, these results are also in line with research by Chen et al. (2021) that brand authenticity can have a direct effect on brand attachment. This research is consistent with previous research (Aggarwal & Mittal., 2022; Malarvizhi et al., 2022) that SMM can influence consumers' intentions to buy a particular brand (intention), where SMM has an important role in the branding process. This can also impose on brand authenticity which is the subjective perception of local brand consumers who have also seen their social media. Therefore, SMM can be considered relevant and effective for branding SME products in the Indonesian market. These empirical research findings confirm brand authenticity concepts (Bruhn et al, 2012; Fritz et al., 2017) which suggests that brand authenticity can act as a differentiator for brands and show certain quality characteristics of a brand. The result of this study also echoes the marketing concept which states that brand authenticity can have a direct impact on consumer behavioral intention (Chen et al., 2021; Fritz et al., 2017; Oh et al., 2019; Pittman et al., 2021)

This finding is also consistent with previous research which shows that the four reflective dimensions of brand authenticity (Morhart et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2021) can comprehensively describe consumer perceptions. Furthermore, these findings provide managerial implications in the form of suggestions for SME marketers to pay attention to consumer perceptions of brand authenticity through the dimensions of symbolism, integrity, continuity, and credibility. Recent research also suggests that brand authenticity can be demonstrated in an actual way by responding to social and environmental issues and local wisdom (Pittman et al., 2021)

There are also several limitations in this research. The first limitation is that this research only examined one brand while several others are also active on social media. In that regard, this study has limitations in generalizing the results of this research model to a wider population. It can be recommended in future research to include other local brands. The second limitation, this research measures the dimensions of brand authenticity, which is a multi-dimensional construct by combining all the indicators in one factor. Therefore, it is recommended in future research to carry out hierarchical analysis, namely with first-order and second-order in the structural model. The third limitation is that the social media used in this research is only Instagram, whereas as is currently known there are other social media such as TikTok which are widely used by the younger generation. Therefore, in future research, it is necessary to study the influence of short video content on TikTok as part of social media marketing.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this research analysis demonstrated that of the six independent variables as stimuli and acting as antecedents of brand authenticity, all have been statistically proven to have a significant positive influence ($\beta<0,05$). The strongest influence was found to come from trendiness or social media content that is considered trendy by consumers. Another strong influence comes from attractiveness or consumer perceptions of interesting and arousing content that could entertain. Furthermore, customization, information clarity, interaction, and influencer role were also found to have a significant positive influence. Consumers on social media also want content that can be tailored to consumer needs, that is interactive and contains clear information. Even though it has a significant result, the influencer role has a relatively weaker influence compared to other variables. These findings provide insight for SMEs in developing more effective digital marketing strategies.

The results of this research add scientific evidence that social media marketing content can influence consumer perceptions of brand authenticity as measured using four dimensions. These research findings revealed that the four reflective dimensions of brand authenticity, namely symbolism, continuity, credibility, and integrity, play a role in measuring the construct. Brand authenticity can provide a signal of products that are of superior quality and that have been tested over a long period. Local snack brands, which have a short life cycle, must be able to offer their own value that is relevant to the market and customers, but there are new challenges to maintaining competitive capabilities in this digital era. Therefore, to maintain the existence of a brand, especially in the eyes of the younger generation as a potential segment, the branding strategy with brand authenticity through SMM Instagram is a rational and recommended choice based on the evidence of this research.

References:

Aggarwal, R., & Mittal, S. (2022). Impact of social media marketing activities on purchase intentions via customer equity drivers. *International Journal of Online Marketing, 12*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijom.299402

Al Adwan, A. (2019). E-marketing strategy: To improve customer preference for local brand over foreign brand in the era of a developing country. *Innovative Marketing, 15*(3), 85–98. https://doi.org/10.21511/im.15(3).2019.07

Algesheimer, R. (2004). *Brand Communities*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-322-81741-9

Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (2000). Authenticating acts and authoritative performances. Questing for self and community. *In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick & C. Huffman (Eds.), The why of consumption. Contemporary perspectives on consumer motives, goals and desires* (pp. 140-163). London: Routledge.

Bagozzi, R. P., Gopinath, M., & Nyer, P. U. (1999). The role of emotions in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 27*(2), 184–206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070399272005

Beverland, M. B., & Farrelly, F. J. (2010). The quest for authenticity in consumption: Consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research, 36*(5), 838–856. https://doi.org/10.1086/615047

Bougie, R., & Sekaran, U. (2020). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach (8th ed.)*. Wiley.

Bruhn, M., Schoenmüller, V., Schäfer, D., & Heinrich, D. (2012). Brand authenticity: Towards a deeper understanding of its conceptualization and measurement. *Advances in Consumer Research, 40*, 567-576.

Cop, R., & Astekin, M. (2022). The effect of brand authenticity on brand preference and the intermediate role of brand trust in internet shopping of generations X and Y. *Turkish Journal of Marketing, 7*(3), 125–147. https://doi.org/10.30685/tujom.v7i3.158

Cheung, M. L., Pires, G., & Rosenberger, P. J. (2020). The influence of perceived social media marketing elements on consumer–brand engagement and brand knowledge. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 32*(3), 695–720. https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-04-2019-0262

Chen, X., Shen, X., Huang, X., & Li, Y. (2021). Research on Social Media Content Marketing: An Empirical Analysis Based on China's 10 Metropolis for Korean Brands. *SAGE Open*. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211052951

Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from Brand Trust and brand affect to brand performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 65*(2), 81–93. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.65.2.81.18255

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), 10310. https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810310

Dolan, R., Conduit, J., Frethey-Bentham, C., Fahy, J., & Goodman, S. (2019). Social Media Engagement Behavior. *European Journal of Marketing, 53*(10), 2213–2243. https://doi.org/10.1108/ejm-03-2017-0182

Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and Research Propositions. *International Journal of Information Management, 59*, 102168. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168

France, C., Merrilees, B., & Miller, D. (2016). An integrated model of customer-brand engagement: Drivers and consequences. *Journal of Brand Management, 23*(2), 119–136. https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2016.4

Freberg, K., & Sutherland, K. (2022). Social Media in public relations. *The Routledge Companion to Public Relations*, 317–337. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003131700-30

Fritz, K., Schoenmueller, V., & Bruhn, M. (2017). Authenticity in branding – exploring antecedents and consequences of Brand Authenticity. *European Journal of Marketing, 51*(2), 324–348. https://doi.org/10.1108/ejm-10-2014-0633

Garcia, D. (2017, August 12). Social Media Mavens Wield 'Influence,' and Rake in Big Dollars. *CNBC*. https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/11/social-media-influ-encers-rake-in-cash-become-a-billion-dollar market.html

Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. (2016). Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on Brand Equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(12), 5833–5841. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.181

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/ebr-11-2018-0203

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43*(1), 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Jacoby, J. (2002). Stimulus-organism-response reconsidered: An evolutionary step in modeling (consumer) behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 12*(1), 51–57. https://doi.org/10.1207/153276602753338081

Koay, K. Y., Ong, D. L., Khoo, K. L., & Yeoh, H. J. (2020). Perceived social media marketing activities and consumer-based Brand Equity. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 33*(1), 53–72. https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-07-2019-0453

Kock, N., & Hadaya, P. (2016). Minimum sample size estimation in PLS-SEM: The inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods. *Information Systems Journal, 28*(1), 227–261. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12131

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing, 57*(1), 1-22.

Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity, 2nd Ed*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Leigh, T. W. (2006). The consumer quest for authenticity: The multiplicity of meanings within the MG subculture of consumption. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 34*(4), 481–493. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070306288403

Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2020). Social media marketing strategy: Definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 49*(1), 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 19*(1), 58–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501

Mankad, M., & Gokhale, D. (2023). Not hungry, but still snacking: The association between hedonic hunger and snacking behaviour among young adults in Vadodara, Gujarat. *Cureus*. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.44814

Malarvizhi, C. A., Al Mamun, A., Jayashree, S., Naznen, F., & Abir, T. (2022). Modelling the significance of social media marketing activities, Brand Equity and loyalty to predict consumers' willingness to pay premium price for Portable Tech Gadgets. *Heliyon, 8*(8). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10145

McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural Foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research, 16*(3), 310. https://doi.org/10.1086/209217

Munnukka, J., Uusitalo, O., & Toivonen, H. (2016). Credibility of a peer endorser and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 33*(3), 182–192. https://doi.org/10.1108/jcm-11-2014-1221

Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An Approach to Environmental Psychology*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Morhart, F., Malär, L., Guèvremont, A., Girardin, F., & Grohmann, B. (2015). Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 25*(2), 200–218. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.11.006

Moulard, J. G., Raggio, R. D., & Folse, J. A. (2020). Disentangling the meanings of brand authenticity: The entity-referent correspondence framework of authenticity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 49*(1), 96–118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00735-1

Napoli, J., Dickinson-Delaporte, S., & Beverland, M. B. (2016). The brand authenticity continuum: Strategic approaches for building value. *Journal of Marketing Management, 32*(13–14), 1201–1229. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257x.2016.1145722

Oh, H., Prado, P. H., Korelo, J. C., & Frizzo, F. (2019). The effect of brand authenticity on consumer–brand relationships. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 28*(2), 231–241. https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-09-2017-1567

Oliver, R. L. (2010). *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer* (2nd ed.). New York, United States of America: Routledge.

Pittman, M., Oeldorf-Hirsch, A., & Brannan, A. (2021). Green advertising on social media: Brand authenticity mediates the effect of different appeals on purchase intent and digital engagement. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising, 43*(1), 106–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2021.1964655

Ryu, E. A., & Han, E. (2021). Social Media Influencer's reputation: Developing and validating a multidimensional scale. *Sustainability, 13*(2), 631. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020631

Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Pick, M., Liengaard, B. D., Radomir, L., & Ringle, C. M. (2022). Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. *Psychology & Marketing, 39*(5), 1035–1064. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21640

Seo, E.-J., & Park, J.-W. (2018). A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on Brand Equity and customer response in the airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport Management, 66*, 36–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2017.09.014

Sharma, A., Fadahunsi, A., Abbas, H., & Pathak, V. K. (2022). A multi-analytic approach to predict social media marketing influence on consumer purchase intention. *Journal of Indian Business Research, 14*(2), 125–149. https://doi.org/10.1108/jibr-08-2021-0313

Shmueli, G., Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Vaithilingam, S., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for using PLSpredict. *European Journal of Marketing, 53*(11), 2322–2347. https://doi.org/10.1108/ejm-02-2019-0189

Schivinski, B., Muntinga, D. G., Pontes, H. M., & Lukasik, P. (2019). Influencing cobras: The effects of brand equity on the consumer's propensity to engage with brand-related content on social media. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 29*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254x.2019.1572641

Tuten, T., & Solomon, M. R. (2017). *Social Media Marketing*. Sage, New Jersey.

Trunfio, M., & Rossi, S. (2021). Conceptualising and measuring social media engagement: A systematic literature review. *Italian Journal of Marketing, 2021*(3), 267–292. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43039-021-00035-8

Vongurai, R. (2020). Factors affecting customer brand preference toward electric vehicles in Bangkok, Thailand. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(8), 383–393. https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no8.383

Voss, K. E., Spangenberg, E. R., & Grohmann, B. (2003). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude. *Journal of Marketing Research, 40*(3), 310–320. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.40.3.310.19238

Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2018). The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty. *Benchmarking: An International Journal, 25*(9), 3882–3905. https://doi.org/10.1108/bij-05-2017-0092

Yang, J., Teran, C., Battocchio, A. F., Bertellotti, E., & Wrzesinski, S. (2021). Building brand authenticity on social media: The impact of Instagram ad model genuineness and trustworthiness on perceived brand authenticity and consumer responses. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 21*(1), 34–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2020.1860168

Zahara, Z., Ikhsan, Santi, I. N., & Farid. (2023). Entrepreneurial Marketing and marketing performance through digital marketing capabilities of SMEs in post-pandemic recovery. *Cogent Business & Management, 10*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2204592

Zarei, A., Farjoo, H., & Bagheri Garabollagh, H. (2021). How Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) and brand equity affect the customer's response: Does overall flow moderate it? *Journal of Internet Commerce, 21*(2), 160–182. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2021.1955461