

Investigating social media's role in brand equity and purchase intentions for non-alcoholic beverages in the Philippines: A descriptive-correlational study

¹Sandra D. Panugayan-Sy & ²Fernando L. Trinidad

Abstract

This study examines how social media influences consumer perceptions of non-alcoholic beverage brands, focusing on social media engagement, brand equity, and purchase intention. It highlights the role of digital engagement, brand communication, and consumer interactions in shaping purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Despite the growing use of social media by Philippine beverage companies, little is known about how social media engagement affects consumer behaviour in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) non-alcoholic beverage sector, particularly considering cultural, platform-specific, and economic factors. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, data were collected from 394 respondents based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table and analysed using partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Results indicate that social media marketing positively influences brand equity, social media engagement, and purchase intention. Brand equity mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention positively, while social media engagement acts as a suppressor, suggesting that engagement alone does not directly increase purchase intention. These findings advance theoretical understanding of the complex relationships among social media marketing, engagement, brand equity, and purchase intention, and provide practical guidance for beverage companies to design social media strategies that strengthen brand value, cultivate consumer loyalty, and effectively influence purchase behaviour.

Keywords: *social media marketing, consumer engagement, FMCG, brand equity, consumer behavior, purchase intention, brand loyalty, advertisement*

Article History:

Received: November 27, 2025

Accepted: January 23, 2026

Revised: January 15, 2026

Published online: February 10, 2026

Suggested Citation:

Panugayan-Sy, S.D. & Trinidad, F.L. (2026). Investigating social media's role in brand equity and purchase intentions for non-alcoholic beverages in the Philippines: A descriptive-correlational study. *International Journal of Academe and Industry Research*, 7(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.53378/ijair.353315>

About the authors:

¹Corresponding author. The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Espana Boulevard, Manila, Philippines. Email: sandrapanugayan@gmail.com

²Professor. The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Espana Boulevard, Manila, Philippines. Email: fltrinidad@ust.edu.ph



© The author (s). Published by Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated.

This is an open-access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive business environment, visibility is essential to promote a product's quality. Over the past decade, social media services like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook have seen significant development in popularity (Chen & Qasim, 2020). Social media has emerged as a moving force in consumer behavior and marketing techniques in the modern digital age. These changes have a considerable impact on the beverage business, which is characterized by fierce competition and changing consumer preferences (Wangpo & Wangmo, 2022). Digital technologies are reshaping markets, corporate settings, and marketing communication tactics. While digitalization presents numerous business opportunities, it also brings substantial challenges that businesses need to navigate (Basimakopoulou et al., 2022).

Social media has impacted roughly half of the 8.06 billion people on the planet since its inception in 1996 (Statista, 2024). Considering their popularity, companies are attempting to figure out how to leverage community websites to build stronger user relationships and communication, which would foster long-lasting partnerships and form wider online brand communities (Jamil et al., 2022). The increased usage of smartphones and the Internet has led companies to recognize the importance of sharing brand information and user experiences through social media (Khoa & Huynh, 2023). These companies increasingly rely on digital marketing as the Internet becomes more widely available (Hawaldar et al., 2022). Additionally, the rise of online feedback influences purchasing decisions, while health and wellness trends and a growing emphasis on sustainability affect client preferences and consumption (Hallak et al., 2022).

Despite the widespread adoption of social media marketing (SMM) by beverage brands, there remains limited empirical clarity on how these activities translate into actual purchase intentions. While social media is widely assumed to enhance consumer engagement and brand outcomes, firms, particularly in the Philippine fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) non-alcoholic beverage sector, lack of evidence on whether engagement mechanisms truly drive conversion or merely increase visibility. This uncertainty makes it difficult for brands to design effective, evidence-based digital marketing strategies.

Sustainability in the beverage industry can be viewed as another tactic to set businesses or goods apart from the competition and satisfy the needs of specific market segments. Indeed, a lot of companies make claims about their socially or ecologically conscious orientations when making and selling beverages, incorporating sustainability into their communication

strategy to support their place in the market and brand (Rodriguez-Sanchez & Sellers-Rubio, 2020). Additionally, due to the large variety of beverages available, customers require comprehensive information about how various beverages might impact their hydration level, provide them energy and other nutrients, and affect their bodies (Kostecka et al., 2024). A study conducted in Saudi Arabia found that healthcare professionals are aware that promoting potentially unhealthy products on websites and social media platforms may impact consumer behavior (Alissa, 2024). The SMM substantially influences how individuals view beverages and their unconscious consumption. Companies, therefore, are analyzing the impact of their social media activities with a focus on integrating these techniques across numerous digital channels (Ajibade & Waseem, 2024).

In the Philippines, FMCG are divided into key segments like food, non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages, cosmetic and personal care (Statista, 2024). With a 1.5% rise in population over the previous year, the total population is currently 118.2 million, and the country's urbanization rate is 48.5%, indicating its developing status. The total number of Filipinos online increased to 86.98 million in 2024, a 2.1% growth over the previous year, with an additional 1.8 million users. User identities on social media platforms are also on a rising trend, with an overall increase of social media users of 86.75 million. Because of this, social media, which is used by 73.4% of the population, continues to significantly impact Filipinos' digital lifestyles (Global Digital Report, 2024). According to the United States Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila (USDA-FAS Manila), as more Filipino consumers adapt to making online purchases, it is projected that Philippine e-commerce sales will reach \$24 billion by 2025, with food and beverage making up one-fifth of the total.

Although e-commerce sales are projected to rise, additional investigations show that revenue growth in all key segments are expected to slow significantly starting 2029 (Statista, 2024). Thus, this research aims to investigate how different social media interactions affect marketing campaigns' effectiveness, how non-alcoholic beverage businesses modify their approaches in response to customer engagement, and how these metrics affect consumer purchasing behavior. The advertising value model (AVM) and elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (ELM) will provide a more comprehensive analysis linking theoretical frameworks to practical findings.

The food and beverage sector is crucial to the economy because it fulfills basic human nutrition and sustenance needs (Lamonaca et al., 2022). This sector drives global economies,

providing jobs and livelihoods while influencing cultural identities and social interactions; it also plays a vital role in health and wellness, sustainability efforts, and innovation, making it integral to both individual well-being and societal progress (Bryła et al., 2022). In the Philippine setting, although beverage companies increasingly embrace social media to interact with consumers, promote products, and invest in digital marketing strategies, their existing understanding of how various forms of social media engagements (SME) influencing consumer behavior, specifically in the non-alcoholic sector, is limited. Much existing research may focus only on alcoholic beverages or other key segment industries, leaving a gap in understanding the unique dynamics of non-alcoholic beverage brands in social media contexts. Additionally, currently available sources focus more on market analysis rather than formal research (Hawaldar et al., 2022). As such, there is a limited exploration of the cultural, platform-specific, and economic impact that may influence SMM effectiveness and brand equity (BE). This research focuses on filling in the gaps by providing localized insights and exploring how SME affects consumer-brand equity within the FMCG non-alcoholic beverage sector.

From the ADM and ELM, this study aims to examine how SMM activities influence purchase intention for non-alcoholic beverage brands in the Philippine FMCG sector. Specifically, it seeks to determine the effect of SMM activities on purchase intention, examine the impact of SMM on BE and SME, assess the mediating role of BE in the relationship between SMM and purchase intention, evaluate the mediating role of SME, including its potential suppressor effect, in the social media marketing–purchase intention relationship, and provide theoretical and managerial insights for optimizing digital marketing strategies in the non-alcoholic beverage industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Advertising Value Model

The AVM explains how consumers evaluate the value of advertising based on informativeness, entertainment, and irritation (Ducoffe, 1996, as cited in Mandasari & Suprapti, 2020). By understanding the value consumers place on advertising, marketers can better design campaigns that meet consumer needs, address ethical concerns, and shape attitudes toward ads. Over time, advertising formats have shifted toward digital channels,

including social media, where advertising is often integrated subtly into user experiences (Kanaveedu et al., 2024). Meanwhile, customization, entertainment, personal interaction, and ongoing relationships are key predictors of consumer attitudes toward advertisements (Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Kanaveedu et al., 2024).

The AVM serves as a guiding framework for this study because it highlights how consumers' perceptions of value in digital marketing influence engagement and brand loyalty. However, while AVM emphasizes the value of advertising, few studies explore how these dimensions translate into SME and BE in the context of non-alcoholic beverages, particularly among Filipino millennials.

2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

The ELM explains how consumers process information through central (cognitive) or peripheral (heuristic) routes, influencing attitudes and behaviors (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, as cited in Vinney, 2024). In digital marketing contexts, the central route corresponds to the perceived informativeness of content, while the peripheral route relates to enjoyment and entertainment. Prior research indicates that these routes can affect online purchase intentions, as positive attitudes formed via either route enhance behavioral outcomes (Erkli, 2022; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, as cited in Santos et al., 2022). Applying ELM to this study allows understanding of why some SMM strategies are more persuasive, influencing both engagement and brand-related perceptions.

The ELM is a widely applied theory to study consumer behavior and describe why some communication styles are more persuasive and effective than others (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, as cited in Santos et al., 2022). However, limited studies investigate its role in mediating SME and BE for FMCG non-alcoholic beverages in the Philippine market. To address some of the research gaps, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand associations are included to measure consumer-brand equity.

2.3 FMCG - Beverage Industry

The Philippine beverage market is one of the largest potential economies in Asia, with the food and beverage industry generating over USD 100 billion in 2020 and projected to grow at a CAGR of 7.16% from 2021 to 2027 (Nguyen, 2024; Statista, 2024). Beverage production, particularly non-alcoholic beverages, contributes significantly to national economic output,

with a gross value added of approximately PHP 154.86 billion in 2023 (Statista, 2024). Non-alcoholic beverages are characterized by frequent purchases, moderate pricing, and strong consumer preference patterns (Store, 2024). Despite the economic importance of this sector, there is limited research on how SMM influences consumer engagement, BE, and purchase intention specifically for non-alcoholic beverages in emerging markets like the Philippines.

2.4. Social Media Marketing

The SMM is characterized by its elements, namely entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and customization. Its activities include advertising on social networking sites, blogger endorsements, and controlling user-generated material, all with the purpose of developing strong and positive brand knowledge in customers' minds (Cheung et al., 2020). When implemented into business practices, it can significantly impact the company's relationships with partners, customers, and prospects (Dwivedi et al., 2021). This notion was reaffirmed in a study that SMM has a significant influence on developing BE, and high BE will boost customer purchase intention (Aji et al., 2020). While studies confirm SMM's influence on BE and purchase intention, the mediating role of SME, particularly in non-alcoholic beverage contexts, remains underexplored. Thus, the following hypothesis were proposed:

H1: Social media marketing (SMM) significantly influences brand equity.

H2: Social media marketing (SMM) significantly influences purchase intention.

H3: Social Media marketing (SMM) significantly affects social media engagement (SME).

2.5. Brand Equity

The BE represents the value a brand brings to a product through consumer perceptions, experiences, and connections with the brand. It comprises various components, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations (Fagundes et al., 2022). Studies have shown that firms utilizing various SMM activities to advocate their brand are more likely to increase brand recognition, publicity, and customer connection (Chen & Qasim, 2020). Meanwhile, another research showed a direct positive relationship between brand association and involvement with consumer purchase intention in beverage contexts (Tjizumaue et al., 2023). However, recent findings suggest that while SMM can increase brand

awareness, awareness alone may not always translate to higher purchase intention (Ben Ameer & Ben Rached, 2024). Another important consideration is that the mediating role of BE in converting SMM efforts into purchase intention, particularly for non-alcoholic beverages, is not yet fully understood. In line with these gaps, the following hypothesis were proposed:

H4: Brand equity (BE) positively influences purchase intention.

H5: Brand equity (BE) mediates the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) and purchase intention.

2.6. Social Media Engagement

The SME involves active participation with content, including liking, sharing, commenting, and joining discussions (Song et al., 2023). Meaningful engagement on social media helps brands connect with their audience, build relationships, and ultimately boost sales (Vinerean & Opreana, 2021). Prior research has shown that consumer engagement has a positive mediating effect on marketing and purchase intention (Munawar et al., 2023), while others argue that only brand-related outcomes, such as brand image, fully mediate the effect, and simple engagement metrics like likes or shares, may not. To address these gaps, the following hypothesis were proposed:

H6: Social media engagement (SME) mediates the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) and purchase intention.

Integrating AVM and ELM offers a useful framework for explaining how SMM content (informativeness, entertainment, customization) can shape consumer engagement and BE, which subsequently influence purchase intention. The literature highlights the roles of both BE and SME as key mediating mechanisms within this process. Focusing on Philippine non-alcoholic beverage consumers, this study examines these mediating pathways and contributes theoretical insights as well as practical implications for marketers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, which is aligned with a deductive research strategy that emphasizes the use of empirical data to test

hypothesized relationships among variables (Aji et al., 2020). SMM elements, such as interactive campaigns, brand storytelling, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements, are believed to play a pivotal role in enhancing BE. This, in turn, is thought to directly amplify consumers' purchase intentions. The correlational study design enables the examination of relationships among the independent (SMM activities), mediating (SME and BE), and dependent (purchase intention) allowing the study to explain how and why these constructs are intrinsically connected. PLS-SEM was employed following consultation with a statistician, who recommended this approach based on the study's predictive orientation, inclusion of multiple mediating variables, and emphasis on explaining variance in purchase intention rather than confirming an established theory.

In addition to examining these relationships, the research design is contextually grounded to account for cultural, platform-specific, and economic influences. The cultural context is reflected in the focus on Filipino millennial consumers, whose social media behaviors are shaped by social interaction, peer influence, and community-oriented engagement. Platform-specific characteristics are incorporated through the operationalization of SMM activities (entertainment, customization, trendiness, interaction, and advertising) based on how beverage brands typically communicate across widely used social media platforms. Economic considerations are addressed by focusing on non-alcoholic beverages within the FMCG sector, a product category characterized by frequent purchase and relative affordability. Overall, the design will determine how SMM affects SME and BE, thereby increasing purchase intention on non-alcoholic beverages in the FMCG sector.

3.2. Participants of the Study and Study Sites

The locale of the research is the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines, given the diversified population, significant social media usage, and inhabitant's urban lifestyle. A sample size of 384 individuals was calculated using the table for published data by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. Meanwhile, the target respondents were millennial consumers aged 28-43 years old as of 2024, who are digital platform users and have subscribed to or followed non-alcoholic brands within the past year. The participants were selected since they are the group most likely to interact with companies using digital marketing. Additionally, millennials are more likely to purchase after seeing an ad, watching a product video, or reading a review on social media (Science, 2023).

A total of 384 millennial respondents between ages 28–43 participated in the study. Younger millennials (ages 28–30) comprised 42.6%, followed by respondents aged 34–36 (16.2%), 40–43 (14.5%), 37–39 (14.2%), and 31–33 (12.4%). The demographic structure shows that SMM for beverages is most influential among the younger segment of the millennial cohort, indicative of their higher digital exposure and platform fluency. Respondents were predominantly female (55.6%), followed by males (36.3%), LGBTQIA+ (6.9%), and those who preferred not to disclose (1.3%). Educational attainment was relatively high, with 76.1% holding a bachelor's degree and an additional 13.5% with postgraduate degrees, reflecting strong digital literacy among the sample. Monthly income distribution indicated a diverse set of socioeconomic backgrounds, with 26.9% earning ₱55,001 and above, and 22.6% within the ₱15,000 and below range. This diversity strengthens the generalizability of findings to a broad millennial market.

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

The study used questionnaires adapted from several research on SMM toward purchase intention, BE, and SME (Aji et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2020; Gummerus et al., 2012; Lakshmi & Sengottuvelu, 2020; Kumar, 2018; Tindi, 2024). Permission to adapt the questionnaire from the authors was obtained through email correspondence, and four experts in the related field of study validated the survey questionnaire. A combination of face-to-face and online questionnaires was distributed to target respondents after securing approval from the University Review Ethics Committee. The sets of questions were modified to fit the purpose of the study, and it adapted a four-point Likert scale for consistency. The scale ranges from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

3.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were first used to present the profile of the respondents and summarize their demographic characteristics. After this, the main analysis was carried out using structural equation modeling (SEM). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to check whether the survey items accurately represented the study's constructs, using factor loadings and model fit indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR) as bases. The reliability of each construct was confirmed through Composite Reliability and Cronbach's alpha, while average variance extracted (AVE) and HTMT ratios were examined to ensure

both convergent and discriminant validity. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were also reviewed to rule out multicollinearity issues. Once the measurement model was validated, path analysis was used to test the relationships among the variables, with significance assessed through p-values.

3.5. Research Ethics

To avoid copyright infringement, the researcher has obtained permission from the original authors to adapt questions from each of their published research for the survey questionnaire to be utilized in the study. The questionnaire was then evaluated by experts before data collection to eliminate offensive, discriminatory, or disagreeable phrasing. Participants were asked to read and agree to the informed consent form about the survey's goal and objective, as well as their contribution to the study. To minimize the inconvenience risks and potential breaches of privacy and confidentiality, the survey was kept brief and relevant, with clear instructions to ensure ease of completion. Personal identifiers were not collected; instead, each respondent was assigned a unique control number to protect their identity. Furthermore, participants may choose to participate or decline at their discretion and could withdraw from the study at any moment, even after providing consent.

4. Findings and Discussion

Respondents ranked Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as the top platforms for beverage-related content, aligning with national usage trends. The most frequently consumed beverage categories included probiotic drinks, coffee-based beverages, bottled juices, and tea, validating the relevance of examining non-alcoholic beverage marketing on social media.

Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) results in Table 1 show that all constructs are highly consistent. The CR values ranged from 0.868 to 0.921, while CA values ranged from 0.797 to 0.900, which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Since all constructs' Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were more than 0.50, convergent validity was further supported.

Table 1*Convergent and discriminant validity measures*

Construct/Indicator	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Average Variances Extracted (AVE)	Full collinearity
Entertainment	0.910	0.877	0.671	2.778
Interaction	0.891	0.845	0.622	2.344
Trendiness	0.869	0.799	0.625	2.811
Advertisement	0.896	0.844	0.682	2.986
Customization	0.889	0.833	0.667	3.089
Brand Awareness	0.913	0.872	0.724	1.789
Perceived Quality	0.921	0.900	0.626	2.767
Brand Loyalty	0.900	0.859	0.643	2.963
Brand Associations	0.881	0.820	0.650	2.519
SM Engagement	0.918	0.892	0.652	2.239
Purchase Intention	0.868	0.797	0.621	2.549

Table 2*Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios*

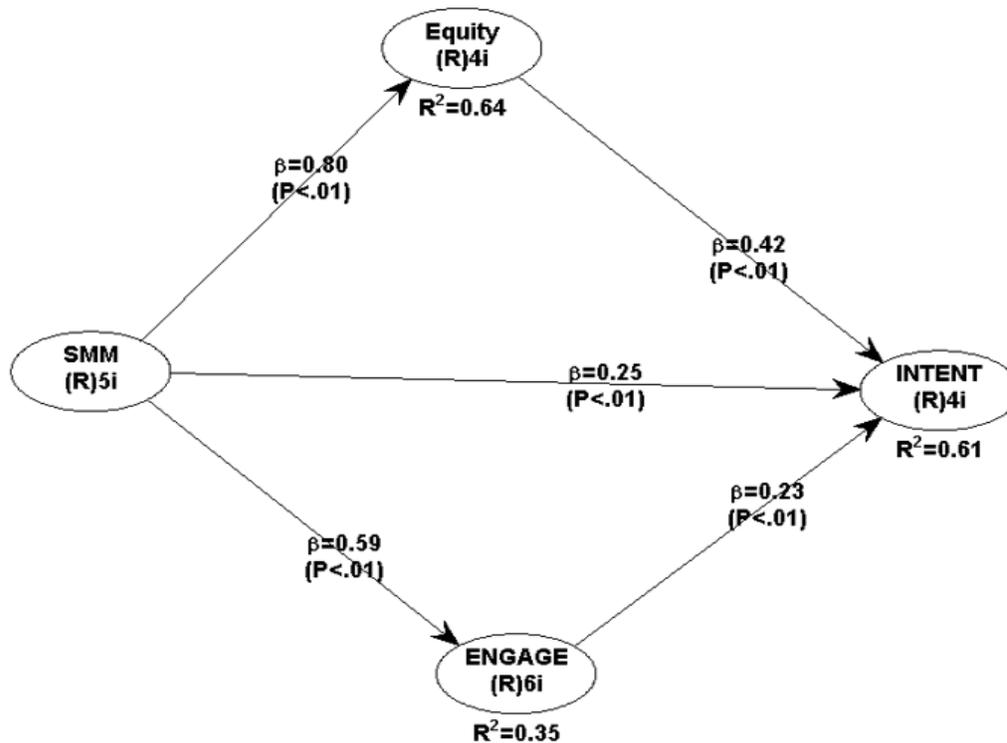
	ENT	INT	TREN	ADS	CUST	AWAR	QUA	LOY	ASSO	ENGA
ENT										
INT	0.585									
TRE	0.692	0.841								
ADS	0.755	0.714	0.849							
CUS	0.679	0.794	0.845	0.866						
AWAR	0.471	0.517	0.533	0.546	0.567					
QUA	0.720	0.563	0.625	0.738	0.737	0.562				
LOY	0.661	0.674	0.700	0.743	0.740	0.674	0.798			
ASSO	0.680	0.675	0.701	0.733	0.794	0.704	0.724	0.720		
ENGA	0.780	0.403	0.563	0.590	0.600	0.335	0.630	0.449	0.586	
PUR INT	0.722	0.665	0.768	0.709	0.741	0.612	0.727	0.829	0.772	0.632

Interpretation: (good if < 0.90, best if < 0.85)

Table 2 displays the HTMT values that were used to evaluate discriminant validity. The values indicate that the constructs are distinct as most HTMT ratios fall below the recommended threshold of 0.85.

Figure 1

The structural model



H1: Effect of SMM on BE

Table 3

Social media marketing and brand equity

IV	DV	Std. Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Interpretation
SMM	BE	0.798	0.045	<0.001	Support H1

The results show that SMM significantly enhances all dimensions of BE: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations, indicating that brand-generated content meaningfully shapes millennials' perceptions of non-alcoholic beverage brands. This supports the AVM, as informative, entertaining, and customized social media content increases perceived advertising value and fosters favorable brand attitudes. From an ELM perspective, these effects suggest that SMM operates through both central routes (via informative content that strengthens perceived quality) and peripheral routes (via visuals, interactivity, and trendiness that reinforce awareness and associations). In a product category where functional differentiation is limited, such digital cues act as important signals of brand

value, reinforcing prior findings (Cheung et al., 2020; Aji et al., 2020) while extending AVM and ELM to the Philippine FMCG non-alcoholic beverage context.

H2: Effect of SMM on Purchase Intention

Table 4

Social media marketing and purchase intention

IV	DV	Std. Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Interpretation
SMM	PI	0.25	0.049	<0.001	Support H2

The SMM exerted a significant positive effect on purchase intention. This suggests that millennials interpret beverage-related social media content both affectively (entertainment, aesthetics) and cognitively (informativeness, product claims). In line with the ELM, social media content influences purchase decisions through both emotional appeal and rational evaluation. Given the low-involvement nature of many non-alcoholic beverage purchases, such digital cues help simplify decision-making and reinforce consumers' willingness to buy.

H3: Effect of SMM on SME

Table 5

Social media marketing and social media engagement

IV	DV	Std. Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Interpretation
SMM	SME	0.594	0.046	<0.001	Support H3

The SMM also significantly predicted SME, showing that campaigns designed with polls, influencer collaborations, trend-driven content, and customizable features effectively encourage users to like, comment, share, or otherwise interact with brand content. These findings suggest that well-crafted social media strategies not only capture attention but also foster active participation, creating meaningful connections between millennials and non-alcoholic beverage brands.

*H4: Effect of BE on Purchase Intention***Table 6***Brand equity and purchase intention*

IV	DV	Std. Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Interpretation
BE	PI	0.419	0.048	<0.001	Support H4

All components of BE positively influenced purchase intention, with brand loyalty showing the strongest effect. This supports ELM by showing that consumers use both central cues (BE components) and peripheral cues (brand loyalty), with loyalty acting as the most powerful heuristic influencing purchase intention. Perceived quality and brand associations also positively predicted purchase intention, suggesting emotional and experiential components remain influential in beverage choices.

*H5 & H6 Mediation Effects of Brand Equity and Social Media Engagement***Table 7***Mediation analysis*

Path	Std. Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
SMM – Equity - Intent	0.334	<0.001	Support H5
SMM – Engagement - Intent	0.134	<0.001	Support H6

The BE significantly mediated the relationship between SMM and purchase intention, reinforcing the view that social media content strengthens purchase intention primarily by enhancing how consumers perceive, trust, and emotionally connect with the brand. This finding aligns with prior studies that emphasize BE as a key mechanism through which marketing activities translate into consumer decision-making, particularly in low- to moderate-involvement product categories such as non-alcoholic beverages. By strengthening brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, SMM enables consumers to develop favorable brand evaluations that directly support purchase intention.

In contrast, SME acted as a suppressor mediator, weakening the direct relationship between SME and purchase intention. This finding challenges the dominant assumption in engagement literature that higher levels of engagement uniformly lead to positive behavioral

outcomes. While engagement increases visibility and interaction, it may also shift consumer attention toward social or entertainment-oriented participation rather than toward evaluative processes that support purchasing decisions. This is particularly relevant in the FMCG context, where purchase decisions are often habitual, price-sensitive, and driven by brand familiarity rather than extensive deliberation.

From a theoretical perspective, this suppressor effect can be explained through the lens of the ELM. Engagement driven largely by peripheral cues, such as humor, trends, or interactive features, may encourage surface-level interaction without activating the central processing route necessary for purchase-related judgment. As a result, engagement that is not supported by strong quality signals, value propositions, or brand meaning may dilute rather than reinforce the persuasive impact of SMM.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how social media marketing (SMM) shapes social media engagement (SME), brand equity (BE), and purchase intention among millennial non-alcoholic beverage consumers in Metro Manila, using the Advertising Value Model and the Elaboration Likelihood Model as theoretical anchors.

The findings show that SMM significantly affects BE, SME, and purchase intention. Entertainment, customization, trendiness, interaction, and advertising shape consumers' perceptions and intentions, with advertising emerging as the strongest driver. BE significantly affects purchase intention, and brand loyalty is identified as the strongest driver of purchase intention. Although SME influences purchase intention, it acts as a suppressor mediator, as high engagement may divert attention toward social interaction rather than purchase-focused cues. Furthermore, BE mediates the relationship between SMM and purchase intention positively and strongly, while SME mediates it negatively. These findings provide insights into how digital marketing influences consumer behavior in a highly competitive FMCG subsector.

The study makes a significant contribution to the literature by offering a thorough knowledge of the relationship between marketing efforts. The finding that SME functions as a suppressor in the relationship between SMM and Purchase Intention offers important insights into how SMM works. This result provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving consumer behavior and refines both the AVM and the ELM.

In Ducoffe's model, which traditionally highlights the importance of content characteristics like informativeness and entertainment, this study reveals that engagement, rather than just content exposure, drives purchase intentions, thus suggesting that engagement itself is a key factor in the advertising value equation. By mediating the relationship between SMM and purchase intention, engagement absorbs much of the effect that SMM would otherwise have directly, shifting focus to the active participation of consumers with content. Importantly, this finding does not suggest that SME is inherently ineffective. Rather, it highlights a boundary condition in which engagement contributes positively only when it is strategically aligned with brand-building cues. Engagement that lacks clear connections to product value, brand differentiation, or purchase prompts may generate interaction without conversion. This dual refinement enhances our understanding of the complex dynamics at play between SMM, consumer behavior, and engagement, showing that engagement is the crucial link between exposure and action.

Furthermore, an important contribution of this study is the focus on Metro Manila Millennials, a demographic that plays a critical role in shaping consumer trends in the Philippines. Millennials in Metro Manila are highly active on social media platforms, using them not only for entertainment but also for information, community engagement, and shopping. Understanding this generation's social media habits is essential for marketers as they become an important driver in consumer behavior.

For managers of non-alcoholic beverage brands, social media must be treated not just as a promotional channel, but as a strategic space for building brand value and sustaining consumer relationships. Managers are encouraged to develop integrated campaigns that combine entertainment, trendiness, informativeness and interactivity. Investing in content that is fun, visually appealing, and culturally relevant, is particularly important, as entertainment and trendiness strengthen emotional connections and enhance brand recall, thereby reinforcing BE.

However, while strengthening two-way communication through interactive features, prompt replies, polls, and user-generated content can increase brand-related interactions and visibility, the findings of this study indicate that SME does not automatically translate into higher purchase intention. In some cases, excessive or unfocused engagement may weaken the direct impact of SMM on buying decisions. As such, engagement-driven initiatives should be strategically aligned with clear brand value propositions, product benefits, and purchase-

oriented cues to ensure that interaction supports, rather than suppresses, consumer purchase intention.

In addition, the finding that brand loyalty is the strongest driver of purchase intention provides valuable direction for managers in the beverage sector. Rather than relying solely on attracting one-time buyers, beverage companies should prioritize strategies that cultivate long-term relationships with consumers. This means ensuring consistent taste, reliable product quality, and positive brand experiences across all touchpoints, as these are key factors that keep customers returning to the same beverage brand.

The findings showed that BE emerges as a key mediator between SMM and purchase intention. Because BE acts as a strong pathway leading to purchase intention, social media managers should focus on reinforcing brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and loyalty across social media touchpoints. This can be done by consistently communicating product benefits through educational posts and informative videos, highlighting quality cues, leveraging influencer partnerships, and nurturing long-term relationships with consumers through incentives, personalized messaging, and consistent storytelling.

SME plays a critical role in shaping consumer behavior. Because the study's results show that current engagement behaviors, such as likes, comments, shares, and time spent, may not effectively support purchase decisions, managers should prioritize different engagement strategies. Organizations should redesign engagement strategies to emphasize informational value, authentic interaction, and purchase-related cues, rather than focusing solely on high engagement metrics. Therefore, companies should prioritize enhancing the quality and relevance of user engagement rather than focusing solely on generating high volumes of activity. Engagement strategies should be restructured to include meaningful, informative, and purchase-supportive content such as product demonstrations, authentic reviews, and clear calls to action. By realigning engagement efforts with purchase-oriented goals, organizations can ensure that SME strengthens rather than suppresses the impact of SMM on purchase intentions.

Future studies can build on the results of this research by looking more closely at how and why SMM influences consumer behavior. Like all studies, this research has a few limitations. First, the researcher used a survey questionnaire to gather data, which means responses were based on participants' personal perceptions. This can sometimes lead to bias, especially if respondents answer in ways they think are expected. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which means that all data were obtained in one go or at a single point

in time. Another limitation is that the study focused only on one sample group and one industry context. Consumer behavior on social media can vary significantly across different age groups, cultures, and product types, so the findings may not be representative of all consumers.

Although this study showed that SMM strongly affects engagement, BE, and purchase intention, the finding that engagement may act as a suppressor suggests that not all engagement is helpful. Because of this, future research could explore several avenues to augment the study findings. First, explore platform-specific differences in the impact of SMM on consumer behavior by conducting comparisons across platforms such as Instagram (IG), Facebook (FB), and TikTok. In addition, different types of engagement, such as active engagement (commenting, sharing) versus passive engagement (liking, scrolling) could be explored, to see which types actually encourage purchasing and which ones may distract or weaken the effect.

Finally, it would also be useful for future researchers to examine other factors that might change the strength of these relationships. For instance, brand trust, message relevance, customer involvement, and additional mediators like perceived value, trust, and electronic word-of-mouth might influence how consumers react to SMM. Adding these kinds of variables could help explain when engagement helps increase purchase intention and when it does not.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was not supported by any funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by the University of Santo Tomas. The conduct of this study has been approved and given relative clearance(s) by The Graduate School Review Ethics Committee.

AI Declaration

The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used ChatGPT, Quillbot, and Perplexity in finding literature and other materials. The author takes full responsibility in ensuring that research idea, analysis and interpretations are original work.

ORCID

Sandra Dy Panugayan-Sy - <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7750-5734>

References

- Aji, P. M., Nadhila, V., & Sanny, L. (2020). Effect of social media marketing on Instagram towards purchase intention: Evidence from Indonesia's ready-to-drink tea industry. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 4(2), 91–104. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2020.3.002>
- Ajibade, T., & Waseem, D. (2024). Social media influence on millennials purchase behaviour of Coca-Cola and Pepsi carbonated soft drink. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 12(4), 2135–2162. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2024.124110>
- Ali, I., & Naushad, M. (2023). Examining the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand image. *Innovative Marketing*, 19(4), 145–157. [https://doi.org/10.21511/im.19\(4\).2023.12](https://doi.org/10.21511/im.19(4).2023.12)
- Alissa, N. A. (2024). The impact of social media on adolescent energy drink consumption. *Medicine*, 103(19), e38041. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000038041>
- Arora, T., & Agarwal, B. (2019). Empirical study on perceived value and attitude of millennials towards social media advertising: A structural equation modelling

- approach. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, 23(1), 56–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972262918821248>
- Basimakopoulou, M., Theologou, K., & Tzavaras, P. (2022). A literature review on digital marketing: The evolution of a revolution. *Journal of Social Media Marketing*, 1(1), 30–40. <https://doi.org/10.33422/jsmm.v1i1.901>
- Ben Ameer, H., & Ben Rached, K. S. (2024). Influence of social media marketing activities on purchase intention through the role of satisfaction, brand awareness, and self-brand connection: Case of accessory of beauty on TikTok. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 28(Special Issue 5), 1–20.
- Bryła, P., Chatterjee, S., & Ciabiada-Bryła, B. (2022). The impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement in sustainable consumption: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(24), Article 16637. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416637>
- Chen, X., & Qasim, H. (2020). Does e-brand experience matter in the consumer market? Explaining the impact of social media marketing activities on consumer-based brand equity and love. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 20(5), 1065–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1915>
- 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>
- 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>
- Erkli, Y. T. (2022). Ayrıntılandırma olasılığı modeli perspektifiyle etkileyici pazarlama. *Journal of Academic Tourism Studies*, 3(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.29228/jatos.57482>
- Fagundes, L., Munaier, C. G., & Crescitelli, E. (2022). The influence of social media and brand equity on business-to-business marketing. *Revista de Gestão*, 30(3), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REGGE-07-2021-0114>
- Gummerus, J., Liljander, V., Weman, E., & Pihlström, M. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 857–877. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01409171211256578>
- Hallak, R., Onur, I., & Lee, C. (2022). Consumer demand for healthy beverages in the hospitality industry: Examining willingness to pay a premium and barriers to purchase. *PLoS ONE*, 17(5), e0267726. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267726>
- Hawaldar, I. T., Ullal, M. S., Sarea, A., Mathukutti, R. T., & Joseph, N. (2022). The study on digital marketing influences on sales for B2B start-ups in South Asia. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(1), 23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8010023>
- Jamil, K., Dunnan, L., Gul, R. F., Shehzad, M. U., Gillani, S. H. M., & Awan, F. H. (2022). Role of social media marketing activities in influencing customer intentions: A perspective of a new emerging era. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 808525. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.808525>

- Kanaveedu, A., Kalapurackal, J. J., N., E., & Sinha, M. (2024). A conceptual framework for consumer engagement in social media influencer posts. In *Advances in marketing, customer relationship management, and e-services* (pp. 72–88). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-2754-8.ch004>
- Khoa, B. T., & Huynh, T. T. (2023). The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty: A study of e-commerce industry. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 7(1), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.11.005>
- Kostecka, J., Jackowska, I., Chabros, I., Kostecka-Jarecka, J., Kawecka, P., & Kostecka, M. (2024). Beverage consumption and factors influencing the choice of beverages among Polish children aged 11–13 years in 2018–2023. *Nutrients*, 16(11), 1625. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16111625>
- Kumar, R. (2018). Scale for advertising effectiveness: A study on traditional and interactive advertisements as per the Lavidge and Steiner model. *Indian Journal of Commerce & Management Studies*, 9(1), 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.18843/ijcms/v9i1/08>
- Lakshmi, K. R. S., & Sengottuvelu, C. (2020). Food and non-alcoholic beverages: Branding through social media. *Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research*, 9(2), 207–214. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2278-4853.2020.00036.1>
- Lamonaca, E., Cafarelli, B., Calculli, C., & Tricase, C. (2022). Consumer perception of attributes of organic food in Italy: A CUB model study. *Heliyon*, 8(3), e09007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09007>
- Mahatmavidya, P., & Yasa, N. (2020). Advertising value of Instagram stories and the effect on millennials' attitude. *Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences*, 3(99), 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.18551/rjoas.2020-03.04>
- Mandasari, I. G. A. P. G. P., & Suprapti, N. W. S. (2020). Influence of advertising value on attitude in increasing repurchase intention. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 8(2), 166–178. <https://ijecm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/8211.pdf>
- Munawar, M. M., Hurriyati, R., Disman, D., Gaffar, V., Martini, E., Hadi, M. I., & Prasetyo, A. (2023). Role of consumer engagement as mediator between social network marketing and consumer purchase intention. In *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research* (pp. 963–974). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-234-7_100
- Nguyen, L. (2024, January 22). *Explore Philippines beverage industry*. Tan Do. <https://tandobeverage.com/explore-philippines-beverage-industry-analysis/>
- Rodriguez-Sanchez, C., & Sellers-Rubio, R. (2020). Sustainability in the beverage industry: A research agenda from the demand side. *Sustainability*, 13(1), 186. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010186>
- Santos, S., Gonçalves, H. M., & Teles, M. (2022). Social media engagement and real-time marketing: Using net-effects and set-theoretic approaches to understand audience- and content-related effects. *Psychology & Marketing*, 40(3), 497–515. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21756>
- Content Science Review. (2023, July 4). *Millennial content consumption fact sheet*. <https://review.content-science.com/millennial-content-consumption-fact-sheet/>
- Song, B. L., Lee, K. L., Liew, C. Y., & Subramaniam, M. (2023). The role of social media engagement in building relationship quality and brand performance in higher education marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 37(2), 417–430. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2022-0315>

- Statista. (2024, August 19). *Worldwide digital population 2024*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>
- Wholesale Dito Store. (2024, August 27). *Philippine beverage industry 2024 and beyond*. <https://www.wholesaledito.store/articles/philippine-beverage-industry-2024-and-beyond>
- Tindi, D. (2024). *Effect of brand perception on purchase intention of alcoholic drinks in Kasarani Sub-County* (MBA thesis). United States International University–Africa.
- Tjizumaue, B., Samuel, S., Nautwima, J. P., & Asa, A. R. (2023). Factors influencing consumer preference among beverage product brands in Namibia. *International Journal of Innovation and Economic Development*, 9(3), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijied.1849-7551-7020.2015.93.2001>
- Vinerean, S., & Opreana, A. (2021). Measuring customer engagement in social media marketing: A higher-order model. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(7), 2633–2654. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer16070145>
- Vinney, C. (2024, February 2). *The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion explained*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-elaboration-likelihood-model-of-persuasion-7724707>
- Wangpo, K., & Wangmo, S. (2022). The influence of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand equity. *Asian Journal of Research in Marketing*, 11(5), 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2277-6621.2022.00018.4>