

## **Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior in the Fast-Food Industry: Special Reference to Colombo, Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates how social media marketing affects customer behaviour in Sri Lanka's fast-food industry in Colombo. The way businesses market themselves has changed dramatically as a result of the social media landscape's explosive expansion, especially in the fast-food sector. The study uses a mixed-approaches strategy that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Residents of Colombo were surveyed to collect quantitative data, while marketing experts from a few fast-food firms were interviewed to acquire qualitative insights. Results show that social media has a significant impact on how the general public views fast-food companies. The study also looks at how social media helps to increase repeat business, consumer loyalty, and trust. It also takes into account the potential and difficulties fast-food companies encounter when putting social media marketing initiatives into action. The study offers insightful information about how social media marketing influences fast-food industry consumer behaviour. Brands hoping to remain relevant and competitive must comprehend how social media affects consumer choices in a cutthroat and changing digital landscape.

**Keywords:** *social media, fast food industry, marketing, consumer behaviour*

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## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Consumer behaviour has been greatly influenced by the fast-food industry's substantial integration of social media marketing into its basic business processes. With the global prevalence of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, users are constantly exposed to brand promotions, customer feedback, and evolving food trends. These platforms are powerful tools for increasing brand awareness, influencing purchasing decisions, and cultivating customer loyalty. (Sociallybuzz, 2023) Fast-food chains leverage high-quality visuals, interactive content, and user testimonials to connect with audiences. The interactive nature of these platforms allows consumers to instantly share experiences, seek suggestions, and provide feedback. In addition to fostering a sense of community, this in-the-moment interaction is crucial in influencing how the general public views the quality, flavour, and allure of food. As a result, social media marketing has become a dominant force in consumer decision-making, especially in urban food landscapes like Colombo.

(Doubleup Social, 2023) In Sri Lanka, particularly in the fast-paced city of Colombo, social media has dramatically transformed how fast-food businesses interact with customers. Social platforms like Facebook and Instagram have become essential marketing tools, helping brands reach and engage a wide and culturally diverse audience. (SocialMedia.lk, 2023) Fast-food establishments utilize these channels to share promotions, visually compelling content, and customer reviews, which in turn shape consumer attitudes and preferences. In a country

where culinary tastes are heavily influenced by cultural diversity, social media acts as a bridge connecting varied consumer interests with fast-food offerings. The platforms' interactive nature supports two-way communication, allowing brands to receive immediate feedback and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly. This real-time engagement contributes significantly to influencing consumer behavior across the country. (E-Repository, 2023) Social media marketing has a significant impact on how consumers in Colombo, the energetic capital of Sri Lanka, behave when it comes to consuming fast food. With a high level of digital engagement among urban dwellers, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer fast-food outlets direct access to their customer base. These platforms help bring out the city's rich culinary diversity, shaped by various ethnic backgrounds and cultural influences.

(Yes Dinner, 2020) Fast-food businesses in Colombo actively use social media to showcase menus, promotions, and customer experiences tailored to local preferences. The immediacy of these platforms allows residents to participate in real-time conversations, offer feedback, and influence public opinion about local fast-food options. Moreover, region-specific content, local language usage, and culturally sensitive advertising strengthen consumer-brand relationships. This personalized approach enhances consumer engagement, making social media a critical tool in promoting fast-food choices in Colombo's urban setting. The blending of traditional food preferences with innovative digital marketing strategies defines the modern fast-food experience in the city. (Roar Media, 2018) In the fast-food sector in Colombo, social media marketing has



become a key factor in influencing consumer behaviour. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter serve as direct communication channels between businesses and the city's diverse population. Through the strategic use of promotional content, customer testimonials, and engaging visuals, fast-food chains influence consumer preferences and behaviors in powerful ways. Cultural diversity plays a significant role in shaping the local food landscape, and this is effectively addressed through targeted, culturally resonant marketing. Social media fosters a sense of community and encourages real-time engagement, enabling users to express opinions, seek recommendations, and contribute to a continuous dialogue around food choices. In Colombo, a city where traditional culinary preferences intersect with modern digital strategies social media has become an indispensable marketing tool. In addition to increasing brand awareness, it strengthens the bonds between fast-food companies and their customers, which eventually influences loyalty and purchase decisions. (Francis et al., 2024)

### **Problem Statement**

Social media marketing has a complicated and wide-ranging effect on how customers behave in the fast-food sector in Colombo. In Colombo's fast-food industry, social media marketing has emerged as a primary tool for engaging consumers, yet its actual impact on consumer behavior remains insufficiently understood. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter play a central role in shaping consumer preferences, yet understanding their influence on Colombo's culturally diverse population remains a challenge. Key concerns include the credibility of user reviews, the persuasive power of

visual content, and the reliability of information shared online (Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2024). Cultural nuances and local preferences also significantly affect how social media campaigns perform. As digital interactions become more dynamic, marketers must adapt to ensure authenticity and consumer trust. Insights from interviews with fast-food employees highlight specific challenges. KFC staff noted skepticism among customers who see promotions as tactics to clear old stock (Milinda, 2024). At Burger King, marketing often fails to reach the intended audience until after visiting the store (Sandamali, 2024). Taco Bell struggles with promoting non-rice items in a rice-preferring culture (Dias, 2024), while McDonald's reports reduced impact due to economic constraints (Nanayakkara, 2024; Gimhani & Francis, 2016). Older consumers resist social media influence, preferring traditional meals (Silva, 2024), and Domino's finds it difficult to promote its international menu effectively (Dananga, 2024). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of empirical study that explicitly looks at how these platforms influence preferences, perceptions, and purchasing behaviour in this context. This study seeks to address that gap.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do consumers respond to social media marketing in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka?
2. How do consumers associate with social media marketing in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka?
3. What is the effect of social media marketing on consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka?



## Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to explore the impact of social media marketing elements on consumer behaviour within Sri Lanka's fast-food sector. Additionally, the study seeks to:

- 1) Understand how consumers respond to social media marketing in relation to their behaviour in the fast-food industry.
- 2) Investigate the connection between social media marketing practices and customer behaviour, and
- 3) Assess the overall influence of social media marketing on consumer actions and decision-making within the industry.

## Key Contributions

This study on the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour in Colombo's fast-food sector is valuable for marketers, businesses, and researchers. It helps companies develop effective strategies tailored to local audiences, enhancing brand awareness and engagement. For consumers, it promotes awareness of marketing influence, leading to more informed choices. Academically, the research adds to the understanding of digital marketing's role in shaping behaviour, offering insights relevant to Colombo and similar urban markets.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Review

The fundamental ideas pertinent to this investigation are delineated in the theoretical review. The fast-food sector, social media marketing, virtual customer interactions, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), consumer behaviour, and new trends are a few of these. The section aims to define each concept and present the

current theoretical understanding associated with them.

### Consumer Behaviour

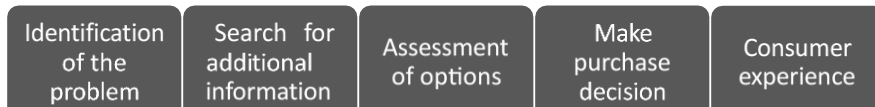
Consumer behaviour is a critical area of focus for organizations striving for long-term success. Businesses must not only attract new consumers but also understand their behavioural patterns to tailor effective strategies for growth and improved performance (Sharma, Jain and Gupta, 2022; Francis et al; 2024). Companies must align their marketing efforts with consumer expectations to remain competitive and sustain future growth. To do this, they must understand theoretical models of consumer behaviour, which provide a framework for identifying and influencing customer decision-making at each stage (Kabadayi and Price, 2014). The consumer decision-making process involves several stages, and businesses must adopt strategies that align with these phases to effectively position their products in customers' minds (Lee and Kim, 2022). However, given the dynamic nature of consumer preferences, companies must continuously adapt to evolving customer needs and update their marketing approaches accordingly (Cheung et al., 2020). The first step involves identifying customer needs, which is crucial for offering relevant products or services. Once these requirements are understood, firms can design suitable solutions and provide the necessary product information to help consumers make informed choices. This may involve evaluating different alternatives before reaching a purchase decision, which ideally should result in a positive consumer experience (Saleem and Hawkins, 2021; Zhao et al., 2022; Francis et al; 2024) Throughout the consumer journey, firms must consistently assess consumer expectations and adapt



their strategies to ensure satisfaction and long-term loyalty. The goal is to offer a seamless experience that encourages repeat purchases and brand advocacy. If managed correctly, such strategies can help businesses achieve their performance objectives and maintain a strong position in the market (Palalic et al., 2021).

relationships with consumers. Thus, cultivating long-term engagement through consistent, value-driven social media activities is essential for brand success (Afriha and Francis 2024).

**Figure 1: Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model on consumer behavior**



**Source: (Rodrigo & Mendis, 2023)**

### **Independent Variable – Social Media Marketing Activities**

Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for enhancing brand visibility and consumer engagement. While it initially serves to increase brand awareness, its influence extends to building lasting relationships between the brand and its audience. By understanding how social media operates, companies can design content and interactions that foster loyalty and long-term engagement.

The development of social media platforms must be consistent with the brand's values and identity (Palalic et al., 2021). However, focusing solely on brand features is insufficient. A broader understanding of market trends and consumer needs is essential. As suggested by (Zhang, Omran and Cobanoglu 2017), social media can serve as a vital bridge between consumers and brands, helping meet expectations and reinforcing trust. (Rodrigo and Mendis 2023) argue that the long-term effectiveness of social media lies in its ability to build enduring relationships. (Deng, Jiang and Fan 2021) also emphasize that brands have successfully used social media to meet strategic goals by enhancing their

### **Critical Analysis of Social Media Marketing**

Social media's role in brand-customer relationships has gained widespread attention. (Zhang, Omran and Cobanoglu 2017) stress the importance of mutual engagement between consumers and brands to solidify these relationships. Similarly, (Sharma, Jain and Gupta 2022) suggest that strong brand relationships are the result of focused strategies that foster trust and consistent messaging. However, the effects of social media are not universally positive. (Armutcu, Zuferi and Tan 2023) point out that social media can sometimes harm a brand's image if not managed properly. Negative sentiment, once it gains traction, can overshadow positive messaging and disrupt the brand's efforts. (Ananda et al. 2019) reinforce this idea by showing that consumer feedback on social media can significantly impact brand reputation. Therefore, while social media has the potential to enhance brand-customer relationships, it requires strategic management. Brands must monitor feedback, respond to concerns promptly, and ensure their platforms foster trust and credibility (Francis et al; 2024). This ensures that social media remains a source of strength rather than vulnerability.



### **Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Influencers, and Interactivity**

Organizations need to use social media strategically to shape consumer behaviour. Social platforms play a key role in information dissemination, consumer persuasion, and decision-making support (Kabadayi and Price, 2014). According to (Florenthal 2019), social media not only delivers essential information but also empowers consumers to make better decisions by enhancing their engagement with brands.

(Bianchi and Andrews 2018) and (Zhao et al. 2022) argue that influencers can be instrumental in leveraging social media for marketing purposes. Influencers provide authenticity and can expand a brand's reach, especially when they resonate with their audience. However, the effectiveness of influencers is debated. (Micu and Ashley 2022) note that not all influencers enhance brand image; their credibility and relevance to the brand are key factors in determining their impact.

Interaction between consumers and brands is equally important. (Saleem and Hawkins 2021) advocate for increased engagement to strengthen relationships. (Armutcu, Zuferi and Tan 2023) highlight that merely establishing a social media presence is insufficient. Instead, meaningful interactions must be cultivated through coordinated marketing strategies. (Rodrigo and Mendis 2023) further stress the importance of nurturing long-term relationships over time. Establishing consistent and transparent communication channels can help brands create trust and ensure that consumers feel heard and valued (Danthanarayana et al. 2024).

### **Relationship Between Social Media and Consumer Behaviour**

Social media, when used effectively, can significantly influence consumer behaviour in favour of a brand. (Lee and Kim 2022) argue that an impactful social media strategy strengthens the consumer-brand relationship by reinforcing positive perceptions. (Cheung et al. 2020) support this by noting that a strong social media presence can help brands achieve greater recognition and loyalty among their target audience.

However, (Bianchi and Andrews 2018), echoing (Saleem and Hawkins 2021), caution against relying solely on social media platforms. For brand visibility and interaction to be effective, companies must be proactive. This includes tailoring messages to specific consumer segments, creating engaging content, and ensuring that all efforts align with an overarching brand strategy.

According to (Sharma, Jain and Gupta 2022), a well-developed social media plan is essential for achieving organizational goals. This strategy should be dynamic, continuously evaluated, and aligned with consumer expectations to deliver consistent value.

(Zhao et al. 2022) emphasize that brands must use social media to nurture stronger relationships with customers, positioning the brand as responsive and credible. Yet, the role of influencers continues to provoke mixed opinions. While their involvement can boost brand visibility, (Micu and Ashley 2022) caution that an influencer's celebrity status alone does not guarantee positive results. Their expertise and authenticity in the relevant field are what enhance brand communication and trust.



In conclusion, when used effectively, social media has a significant impact on consumer behaviour. It enables companies to connect with audiences, reinforce brand values, and drive purchasing decisions.

Nonetheless, firms must remain vigilant, adjusting their strategies based on evolving consumer expectations and the dynamic nature of online platforms. The thoughtful integration of influencer marketing and interactive engagement is essential for building and maintaining a powerful brand presence in the digital age.

**Table: 1 Empirical Literature review summary**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Article Title</b>	<b>Factors</b>
Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu (2017)	Generation Y's positive and negative EWOM: use of social media and mobile technology	To explore Gen Y's EWOM behavior.
Ananda, Hernández-García, Acquila-Natale, & Lamberti (2019)	What makes fashion consumers "click"? Generation of EWOM engagement in social media	To examine EWOM in fashion marketing.
Palalic, Ramadani, Gilani, Gërguri-Rashiti, & Dana (2021)	Social media and consumer buying behaviour decision: what entrepreneurs should know	To assess social media's effect on buying.
Rodrigo & Mendis (2023)	Impact of social media influencers' credibility on millennial consumers' green purchasing behavior	Studying influences credibility for millennials.
Lee & Kim (2022)	The influence of technological interactivity and media sociability on sport consumer value co-creation behaviours	To analyze social media's role in sports buying.
Deng, Jiang, & Fan (2021)	How social media's cause-related marketing activity enhances consumer citizenship behaviour	To link social media to customer loyalty.
Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger III, & De Oliveira (2020)	Driving COBRAs: the power of social media marketing	To evaluate social media's effect on behavior.
Sharma, Jain, & Gupta (2022)	The power to voice my hate! Exploring the effect of brand hate and perceived social media power on negative eWOM	To explore brand hate via social media.
Florenthal (2019)	Young consumers' motivational drivers of brand engagement behaviour on social media sites	To identify drivers of brand engagement.

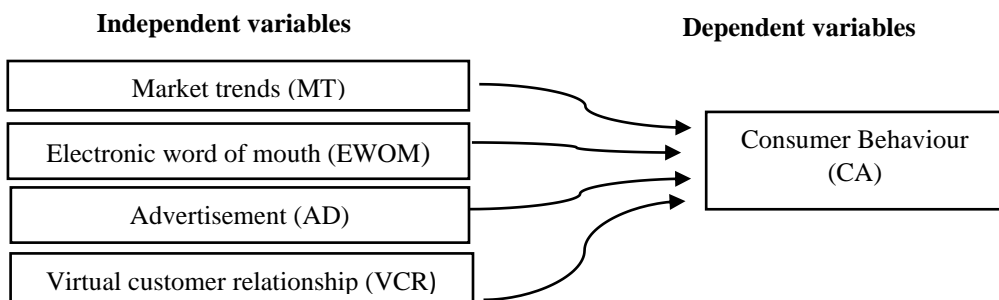


Zhao, Sun, Zhang, & Ma (2022)	Traditional media or social media? Corporate green media communication in post-COVID-19 China	Comparing traditional vs social media.
Armutcu, Zuferi, & Tan (2023)	Green product consumption behaviour, green economic growth and sustainable development	To promote green products is used via social media.
Micu & Ashley (2022)	Territorial consumer behaviours on social media: a dark side of psychological ownership	To assess privacy issues on social media.
Bianchi & Andrews (2018)	Consumer engagement with retail firms through social media: an empirical study in Chile	To measure engagement via social media.
Saleem & Hawkins (2021)	Employee-generated content: the role of perceived brand citizenship behaviour and expertise	To link corporate behavior to consumer reaction.
Kabadayi & Price (2014)	Consumer-brand engagement on Facebook: liking and commenting behaviours	To identify steps for Facebook engagement.

**Source: Author developed**

### Conceptual Framework of the study

The conceptual framework was developed using the elements identified in the literature review as a guide



Source: Developed by Authors based on theoretical literature

The main hypotheses are summarized as follows:

**H1a** -There is a positive linear relationship between market trends in social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry.

**H2a** -There is a positive linear relationship between Electronic word of mouth EWOM on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry.

**H3a** -There is a positive linear relationship between advertisement in social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry.

**H4a** -There is a positive linear relationship between virtual customer relationship on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry.



The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) of this study asserts that social media marketing and consumer behaviour are not significantly correlated. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), on the other hand, contends that there is a substantial difference.

## Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach to investigate how social media affects customer behaviour in the fast-food sector in Colombo. The quantitative approach provided a structured framework for gathering and analysing numerical data from a relatively large sample, aligning well with the study's aim of identifying how social media affects dining decisions. Most likely, a cross-sectional research strategy was used, which enables data to be gathered all at once in order to identify correlations between variables. This approach supported the investigation into the immediate effects of social media on consumer choices (Saunders et al., 2019).

Purposive random sampling—a form of non-probability sampling—was selected to identify individuals who frequently consume fast food in Colombo and actively use social media platforms. This technique ensured the participants had relevant experience with both fast-food consumption and social media usage. The objective was to include individuals whose insights were directly related to the study's focus, enhancing the reliability and contextual relevance of the findings (Etikan et al., 2016).

The study collected 120 valid responses, balancing statistical power with practical constraints such as time and resource availability. In determining this sample size, considerations such as confidence levels, power analysis, and effect size were likely assessed to ensure the adequacy of the data for meaningful interpretation and alignment with established research norms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This sample allowed the

researchers to detect significant trends and patterns in consumer behaviour as influenced by social media.

The research tool used was a structured questionnaire aimed at capturing standardised quantitative data. Questions were thoughtfully crafted to gather insights into participants' social media usage and its connection to their fast-food consumption habits. The questionnaire facilitated consistent data collection, supporting systematic statistical analysis. Distribution occurred through two main channels: WhatsApp and in-store QR codes placed at selected fast-food outlets. This multi-channel dissemination enhanced participation among the target demographic (Bryman, 2016). Participants were asked to disclose details about their preferences, consumption frequency, and social media engagement. The design of the instrument ensured alignment with the study objectives, enabling the identification of relevant patterns and associations between social media engagement and purchasing behaviour.

Once data collection was completed, responses were coded and processed using statistical software. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Key variables included the influence of social media on decision-making, preferred platforms, and usage frequency. The study also integrated a thematic analysis of open-ended responses to uncover recurring themes and qualitative insights. This mixed-method approach deepened the understanding of how participants perceive social media's impact on their food choices (Flick, 2018). The statistical treatment involved using SPSS software to conduct a comprehensive analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, offered insights into central tendencies and dispersion among variables. Inferential techniques, including ANOVA, were applied to assess



variations in consumer behaviour across different demographic and behavioural segments. Because of the data's potential non-normal distribution, Spearman correlation analysis was employed to determine the direction and strength of the correlations between the variables (Field, 2018). Multiple linear regression analysis was used to investigate predicted correlations in more detail. This allowed the researchers to determine which factors significantly influenced consumer behaviour. Scatter plots likely illustrated these relationships, while an analysis of standardised residuals helped identify anomalies and assess model adequacy. The model summary, including the R-squared value, provided an overview of how much variance in consumer behaviour could be explained by the predictors included in the model.

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Statistics

Collectively, these analyses offered a detailed and rigorous examination of the factors shaping fast food consumption patterns in Colombo as influenced by social media engagement.

The table 2 below represents the descriptive statistics found that the mean values for virtual consumer relationships (3.27) and advertisements (3.45) fall between agreement and disagreement, indicating neutral responses. On the other hand, the mean values for social media trends and electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) were nearly 4, showing general agreement. Consumer behaviour also had a mean of 3.7, indicating agreement. Regarding variability, social media trends showed the least deviation (SD = 1.23), while EWOM had the highest (SD = 1.33), suggesting more varied responses. All skewness values ranged between -1 and +1, indicating a near-normal distribution, thus allowing for the use of parametric statistical methods (Field, 2018).

**Table 2: Results of Descriptive Statistics**

Measures		VCR	AD	EWOM	MT	CB
N	Valid	120	120	120	120	120
	Missing	1	1	1	1	1
Mean		3.2778	3.45	3.5278	3.6667	3.7083
Standard Deviation		1.2916	1.24771	1.33514	1.23528	1.31894
Skewness		-0.154	-0.362	-0.398	-0.679	-0.645
Standard Error of Skewness		0.221	0.221	0.221	0.22	0.221
Kurtosis		-1.291	-0.888	-1.087	-0.559	-0.762
Standard Error of Kurtosis		0.438	0.438	0.438	0.437	0.438

Source: Survey data,2024



**Reliability Analysis**

**Table 3: Results of Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number Of Items	Status
MT	0.970	3	Excellent
EWOM	0.917	3	Excellent
AD	0.976	3	Excellent
VCR	0.959	3	Excellent
CB	0.982	3	Excellent

Source: Survey data,2024

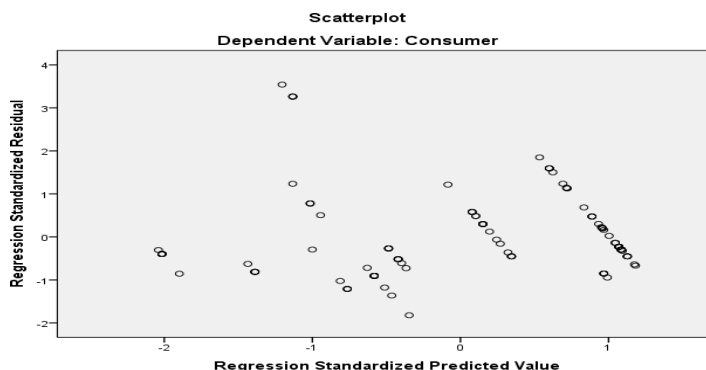
The descriptive statistics started data analysis with a reliability test to evaluate the internal consistency of interval scale items, as shown in table 3 above. Variables tested included trends, EWOM, advertisements, virtual customer relationships, and consumer behaviour, all drawn from the study's conceptual framework. High internal consistency was demonstrated by reliability analysis, with all Cronbach's Alpha values surpassing 0.9. This indicates that the interval scale items were consistent and aligned in measuring the same underlying constructs. As a result, the variables were considered reliable, allowing the researcher to proceed confidently with operationalizing them and addressing the study's objectives effectively (Field, 2018).

**Homoscedasticity**

The figure 1 used a scatter plot to examine the behaviour of residuals, plotting standardized residuals against standardized predicted values. The residuals appeared randomly scattered without any systematic pattern, indicating constant variance. The absence of a funnel shape further confirmed that the residuals were evenly spread, suggesting that the linear model remained appropriate and had not shifted into a non-linear form. This also implies there is no issue of heteroscedasticity, thereby supporting the validity of the model.

**Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

The table 4 below represents the Correlation analysis revealed highly significant positive relationships between all social media factors and consumer behavior. The p-values for all variable virtual customer relationships, advertisements, EWOM, and trends—were 0.000, indicating statistical significance. Correlation coefficients were also high: 0.908 for virtual customer relationships, 0.917 for advertisements, 0.960 for EWOM, and 0.959 for trends. These strong correlations suggest that each of these social media factors is closely associated with consumer behavior. These findings led the researcher to the conclusion that every social media variable under investigation significantly and favourably affects consumer behaviour.



**Table 04 : Results of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

<b>Pearson Correlations</b>		<b>VCR</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>EWOM</b>	<b>MT</b>	<b>CB</b>
VCR	Pearson Correlation	1	0.931**	0.965**	0.912**	0.908**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120
AD	Pearson Correlation	0.931**	1	0.963**	0.924**	0.917**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120
EWOM	Pearson Correlation	0.965**	0.963**	1	0.963**	0.960**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120
MT	Pearson Correlation	0.912**	0.924**	0.963**	1	0.959**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	120	120	120	120	120
CB	Pearson Correlation	0.908**	0.917**	0.960**	0.959**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	120	120	120	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data, 2024

### Multiple Linear Regression Model

<b>Table 5: Model Summary</b>					
<b>Model Summary</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Standard Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
1	.969 <sup>a</sup>	0.94	0.938	0.32887	2.5
a. Predictors: (Constant), MT, VCR, AD, EWOM					
b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Behaviour					
Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data, 2024					

<b>Table 6: ANOVA results for the regression model</b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Regression	194.576	4	48.644	449.768	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	12.438	115	0.108		
	Total	207.014	119			
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MT, VCR, AD, EWOM						
Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data, 2024						



An excellent match is confirmed by the model summary, which displays a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.94, meaning that the model explains 94% of customer behaviour. The adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.938, showing minimal difference and suggesting no unnecessary variables were included. A significant combined association between social media factors and customer behaviour is indicated by the multiple correlation value of 0.969. (Market Trends (MT), Virtual customer relationship (VCR), Advertisement (AD), Electronic word of mouth (EWOM). The Durbin-Watson value of 2.5 confirms residual independence, supporting the model's validity.

The F-statistic's p-value in the regression ANOVA is 0.000, which suggests a high degree of significance. This demonstrates the validity and statistical significance of the entire model. It demonstrates that the combined effect of all social media factors— Market Trends, Virtual customer relationship, Advertisements, and Electronic word of mouth —has a meaningful impact on consumer behaviour. The individual influence of each variable was further examined through the coefficients presented in the regression output table.

The individual beta value for EWOM has a probability of 0.000, indicating a highly significant positive effect on consumer behaviour, with a beta coefficient of 0.773. Similarly, the trend variable is also highly significant ( $p = 0.000$ ) with a beta value of 0.452, showing a strong positive influence. However, virtual customer relationships and advertisements are not individually significant, as their p-values exceed 0.05, meaning they do not impact consumer behaviour on their own but do so collectively. Among all variables, EWOM is the most influential factor, followed by trends based on standardized beta coefficients.

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All p-values are 1.000, suggesting no significant link, according to the investigation of the relationship between social media characteristics and standardised residuals. This confirms that the residuals are not influenced by the social media variables, supporting the model's validity. Furthermore, there are positive correlations between all independent variables and the dependent variable, consumer behaviour. The model's dependability and applicability are thus further supported by the acceptance of all alternative hypotheses ( $H_n$ ) and the rejection of the null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ).



<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1	(Constant)	0.152	0.101		1.499	0.137
	VCR	-0.155	0.091	-0.152	-1.701	0.092
	AD	-0.092	0.09	-0.087	-1.018	0.311
	EWOM	0.773	0.16	0.783	4.839	0
	MT	0.452	0.094	0.423	4.811	0

a. Dependent Variable: (CA)  
b.

Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data, 2024

<b>Social media</b>		<b>Standardized Residual</b>
VCR	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	120
AD	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	120
EWOM	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	120
MT	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	120

Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data, 2024

### Hypothesis Summary

The main objective of this study was “To identify how social media marketing factors has impacted consumer behaviour in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka.”The main objective was divided into three sub-objectives, all of which were successfully addressed.

The study effectively tackled each objective and research question using the specified analytical methods. Additionally, these techniques were used to test the hypotheses, resulting in the acceptance of all alternative hypotheses and the rejection of the null hypotheses.



**Table 9: Hypothesis summary**

		H1	H2	H3	H4
Descriptive Statistics	Cronbach's Alpha	0.97	0.917	0.976	0.959
	Mean	3.6667	3.5278	3.45	3.2778
	Standard Deviation	1.23528	1.33514	1.24771	1.2916
	Skewness	-0.679	-0.398	-0.362	-0.154
	Pearson Correlation	0.959	0.96	0.917	0.908
Multiple Linear Regression	R Square	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94
	R	0.969	0.969	0.969	0.969
	Durbin Watson	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Sig	0	0	0	0
	Mean square	48.644	48.644	48.644	48.644
	Individual Beta Value	0.152	-0.155	-0.092	0.452
	Probability	0	0	0.311	0.092

Source: Compiled by Authors based on survey data. 2024

The findings indicate that all four hypotheses demonstrate a significant and positive influence on the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour. As a result, the null hypotheses are rejected, and the alternative hypotheses are accepted, confirming the relevance of the variables. Moreover, the independent variables collectively affect the dependent variable.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study confirms that social media marketing significantly influences consumer behaviour in Colombo's fast-food industry. The findings underscore the importance of strategic social media engagement in shaping customer choices and preferences in this rapidly evolving sector.

Future research could explore the individual impact of different social media platforms, the role of emerging digital trends, and how a restaurant's online presence affects consumer decisions regarding dine-in versus home delivery options. The use of a questionnaire presented limitations, potentially restricting access to some respondents. Incorporating interviews or alternative methods could yield more comprehensive insights. Additionally, the small sample size of 120 may limit the generalisability of results. Increasing the sample size and incorporating qualitative data would enhance the depth and accuracy of findings. The purposive sampling method also limited the study, as it only targeted customers dining in fast-food restaurants. Future research should address these limitations to provide more detailed and representative results.



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