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# Digital Marketing Strategies and Customer Satisfaction among Generation Z in The Malaysian Food and Beverage Industry: A Systematic Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

The food and beverage (F&B) industry has transformed consumer engagement through the rapid growth of digital marketing, especially among Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers who rely heavily on digital platforms for brand interaction, information search, and purchase decisions. Despite the growing body of research, evidence remains dispersed across digital marketing tactics, customer satisfaction (CS) metrics, and behavioural outcomes, hindering a thorough understanding of the variables influencing digital marketing effectiveness (DME). To identify research gaps and suggest future research directions, this systematic literature review attempts to synthesise current empirical evidence on the relationships between digital marketing strategies, CS, and DME, with a focus on Gen Z consumers in the F&B sector. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines were adhered to in this review. Peer-reviewed research published between 2015 and 2025 was found through a thorough search of the Scopus database. After duplicate removal, screening, eligibility evaluation, and quality assessment, 79 studies were retained for descriptive analysis, thematic synthesis, geographic analysis, and evidence gap identification. The synthesis revealed five main themes: digital platform quality and technology adoption; social media, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer engagement; customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioural outcomes; digital marketing strategy and personalisation; and F&B and online food delivery behaviour. The results consistently show that CS, personalisation (PER), digital platform quality, and consumer engagement all affect DME. However, many questions remain about Gen Z, integrated theoretical frameworks, longitudinal empirical studies, and Malaysian F&B consumers. According to the review's findings, CS is the primary factor linking digital marketing tactics to DME. The study contributes by synthesising disparate evidence into a cohesive conceptual understanding, providing a solid basis for further empirical research, and offering F&B managers practical guidance on improving digital marketing performance through user-friendly platforms, responsive customer service, responsible PER, engaging digital content, and ongoing satisfaction monitoring.

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## 1. Introduction

Rapid advances in digital technologies have transformed how organisations attract, engage and retain customers, making digital marketing a strategic capability for enhancing customer satisfaction (CS) and digital marketing effectiveness (DME) [1-3]. Contemporary digital marketing integrates website usability (WU), mobile application interface (MAI), customer engagement (CE), social media engagement (SME), personalisation (PER) and loyalty programmes (LP) to shape customer satisfaction (CS) across the digital journey [4-6]. This transformation is especially evident in the F&B industry, where consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms, online reviews, mobile ordering and social media before making purchase decisions [7-9]. Although numerous studies report positive relationships between digital marketing capabilities, trust, loyalty and performance, the evidence remains fragmented across contexts, constructs and theories [10-16].

Existing research examines diverse digital marketing constructs, including social media marketing, WU, MAI, CE and PER, yet these variables are frequently investigated independently, limiting understanding of how they jointly influence DME [3-5]. Moreover, CS has been conceptualised inconsistently as both an outcome and a mediating mechanism, reducing theoretical integration and comparability across studies [7,11,17,18]. Research has also concentrated on retail, tourism and e-commerce, while comparatively little synthesis exists for Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers in the F&B industry [8,9,19-22].

Evidence extraction revealed four major gaps. First, theoretical perspectives such as the Technology Acceptance Model, Stimulus-Organism-Response, Trust Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory have rarely been integrated into a unified explanation of DME [23-25]. Second, operationalisation of digital marketing varies considerably, preventing identification of the most influential strategic dimensions [11,26]. Third, prior reviews seldom examine the combined relationships among digital marketing strategies, CS and DME [2,18]. Finally, limited evidence specifically focuses on Malaysian Gen Z consumers in the F&B industry [7,8,27-29].

This review addresses the question: How do digital marketing strategies influence CS and DME, and what research gaps remain, particularly for Gen Z consumers in Malaysia's F&B industry? The review synthesises empirical evidence from Scopus-indexed studies to map research development, identify major digital marketing dimensions, consolidate theoretical and methodological evidence, highlight research gaps and propose a future research agenda supporting an integrated framework for DME among Gen Z consumers in the F&B industry [6,7,8,25].

The review contributes theoretically by integrating fragmented evidence on digital marketing strategies, CS and DME; methodologically by providing a transparent systematic synthesis; and practically by identifying digital marketing priorities that can strengthen customer experiences and organisational performance in the F&B sector [1,2,11,23].

Recent work published in the *Journal of Advanced Research in Technology and Innovation Management* also highlights the importance of innovation-oriented organisational capabilities in enhancing sustainable business outcomes, reinforcing the need to examine digital marketing as a strategic capability rather than merely a promotional tool [30].

Comparatively, existing studies contribute to different aspects of DME. Platform-oriented research primarily links usability and service quality to satisfaction and continued use [7,9,11], whereas social media research emphasises engagement, trust, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase responses [14,24,31]. Other studies focus on PER, loyalty mechanisms

and behavioural intentions [5,26]. Although these perspectives are complementary, they remain conceptually dispersed and offer limited explanation of how multiple digital marketing strategies operate collectively through CS to influence DME.

Despite the growing body of research on digital marketing, important gaps remain. Existing studies often examine social media, digital platforms, CE, PER, and CS independently, with limited integration of their collective influence on DME. Moreover, research has concentrated on retail, tourism, and e-commerce, while evidence on Malaysia's F&B industry and Gen Z consumers remains limited. Addressing these gaps is essential to provide a more integrated understanding of DME and to support evidence-based managerial decision-making.

Accordingly, this systematic literature review (SLR) addresses the fragmented evidence on integrated digital marketing strategies, CS, and DME, particularly the limited evidence concerning Gen Z consumers in Malaysia's F&B industry. It synthesises empirical evidence on the relationships between digital marketing strategies (WU, MAI, CE, SME, PER, and LP), CS, and DME by reviewing Scopus-indexed studies, identifying key themes and research gaps, and proposing directions for future research. The review is significant because it consolidates dispersed theoretical, methodological, and contextual evidence into an integrated basis for future empirical research and evidence-based managerial decision-making in Malaysia's F&B sector.

## 2. Review Methodology

### 2.1 Review Design and Protocol

This SLR synthesised empirical evidence on digital marketing strategies, CS, and DME. PRISMA 2020 guided identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion to ensure transparency and reproducibility [1,2,18]. The ten-stage protocol covered planning, searching, screening, quality assessment, extraction, synthesis, gap identification, and manuscript development (see Figure 1).

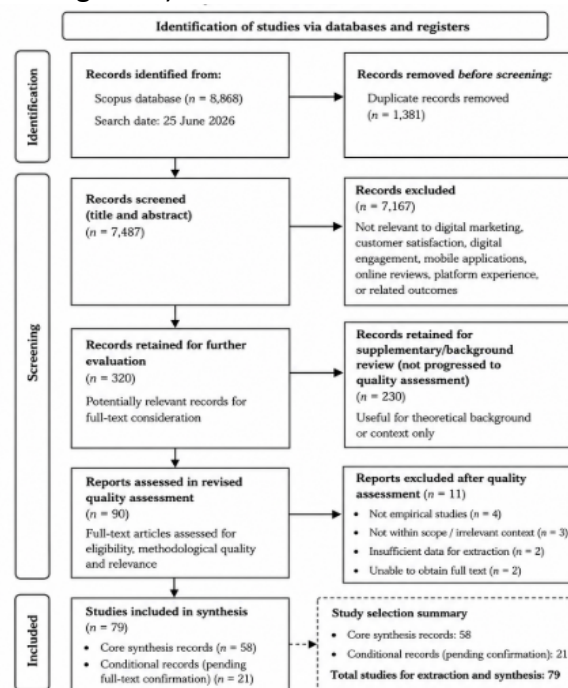


Fig. 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram

## 2.2 Search Strategy and Database Selection

Scopus was selected because it provides the broadest and most consistent coverage of peer-reviewed journals within the Business, Management and Accounting discipline, ensuring methodological consistency and high-quality evidence for systematic synthesis [32-34]. Searches combined digital marketing, CS, DME, Gen Z, F&B, and adjacent consumer-service terms through Boolean operators, phrases, and truncation (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

**Search strategy and scopus filters**

| Component                    | Specification                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Database                     | Scopus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Search focus                 | Digital marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, marketing effectiveness, consumer behaviour, Generation Z, food and beverage and adjacent consumer-service contexts.                                                        |
| Search fields                | Title, abstract and keywords, based on Scopus export metadata.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Core digital marketing terms | "digital marketing", "social media marketing", "content marketing", "mobile marketing", "website usability", "mobile application", "personalisation/personalization", "loyalty programme/program", eWOM, user-generated content. |
| Outcome terms                | "customer satisfaction", loyalty, engagement, purchase intention, continuance intention, repurchase intention, trust, perceived value, marketing effectiveness.                                                                  |
| Context terms                | F&B, restaurant, food service, cafe, fast-food, online food delivery, foodtech, hospitality, retail, e-commerce and consumer-service contexts.                                                                                   |
| Search operators             | Boolean operators AND/OR, phrase searches and truncation were used to maximise relevant retrieval.                                                                                                                               |
| Export format                | CSV/RIS metadata was exported from Scopus for screening and evidence extraction.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Working evidence base        | 79 extracted records comprising 58 core synthesis records and 21 conditional full-text records.                                                                                                                                  |

## 2.3 Eligibility Criteria

Eligible records were English-language, Scopus-indexed empirical studies examining digital marketing, platforms, service quality, engagement, trust, satisfaction, loyalty, purchase behaviour, or related outcomes in F&B and comparable consumer contexts (see Table 2). Technical, clinical, education-only, non-consumer, and irrelevant studies were excluded.

**Table 2**

**Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

| Criterion        | Inclusion Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                   | Exclusion Criteria                                                                            |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Publication type | Peer-reviewed journal article or high-relevance empirical publication indexed in Scopus.                                                                                                             | Conference-only records, editorials, book chapters and unrelated document types.              |
| Language         | English-language publications.                                                                                                                                                                       | Non-English publications.                                                                     |
| Topic relevance  | Studies addressing digital marketing, social media marketing, website/app quality, e-commerce, digital service quality, eWOM, engagement, trust, satisfaction, loyalty or related consumer outcomes. | Studies unrelated to digital marketing, marketing, customer experience or consumer behaviour. |

**Table 2 (Continued)**

| Criterion            | Inclusion Criteria                                                                                                     | Exclusion Criteria                                                                                         |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Empirical relevance  | Quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, analytical, or data-driven empirical studies relevant to the review's focus. | Purely technical, engineering-only, education-only, health-clinical or non-consumer studies outside scope. |
| Context relevance    | F&B, restaurant, food delivery, hospitality, retail, e-commerce, mobile commerce or consumer-service contexts.         | Contexts that could not provide evidence for digital marketing, satisfaction, or effectiveness.            |
| Population relevance | General consumers, young consumers, students, Gen Z, millennials or online users.                                      | Non-consumer organisational or technical samples with no marketing relevance.                              |

## 2.4 Identification, Duplicate Removal, and Screening

The search identified 8,868 records. After removing 1,381 duplicates, 7,487 records remained for title and abstract screening. We assessed 90 studies for quality; 58 were classified as core studies and 21 as conditional full-text records, resulting in a 79-study synthesis base (see Table 3). The synthesis includes 79 eligible studies published between 2015 and 2025 that met the screening and quality-assessment criteria; therefore, the publication-year distribution represents the final evidence base retained for systematic synthesis.

**Table 3**

PRISMA screening summary

| Screening Stage                                 | Records | Explanation                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Records identified from Scopus                  | 8,868   | Initial combined Scopus search output.                                               |
| Duplicate records removed                       | 1,381   | Removed before title and abstract screening.                                         |
| Records screened after deduplication            | 7,487   | Unique records screened for relevance.                                               |
| Records excluded after title/abstract screening | 7,167   | Excluded as outside the review scope.                                                |
| Records retained for secondary screening        | 320     | Potentially relevant studies requiring further evaluation.                           |
| Records retained for supplementary review       | 230     | Relevant for theoretical background but not progressed to formal quality assessment. |
| Records assessed in revised quality assessment  | 90      | Shortlisted for methodological and relevance appraisal.                              |
| Core synthesis records                          | 58      | Strong fit for evidence extraction and synthesis.                                    |
| Conditional full-text records                   | 21      | Moderate fit; retained pending full-text confirmation.                               |
| Reserve/background records                      | 11      | Useful for background or theory only.                                                |
| Records extracted for synthesis                 | 79      | 58 core + 21 conditional records.                                                    |

Note. Counts are based on the revised broadened screening and quality assessment workflow.

## 2.5 Quality Assessment

Quality assessment examined strategy, outcome, context, population, and empirical-method fit. Scores classified records as core, conditional, reserve, or excluded (see Table 4), allowing conceptually relevant evidence to be retained without relying solely on exact keyword matches.

**Table 4**  
Quality assessment criteria and outcomes

| Criterion/<br>Outcome                | Score or<br>Count | Description/Decision Rule                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C1 Digital Marketing<br>Strategy Fit | 2                 | Presence of digital marketing, social media, apps, websites, platforms, PER, LPs, online food delivery, or related strategy terms         |
| C2 Outcome Fit                       | 2                 | Presence of CS, digital/marketing effectiveness, loyalty, purchase intention, engagement, trust, perceived value or related outcome terms |
| C3 Context Fit                       | 2                 | F&B, restaurant, food delivery, hospitality, retail or consumer-service context                                                           |
| C4 Population Fit                    | 1                 | Gen Z, young consumers, students, millennials or consumer sample relevance                                                                |
| C5 Empirical/<br>Method Fit          | 2                 | Evidence of empirical methods: survey, questionnaire, SEM, PLS-SEM, regression; sample, respondents, findings, or data collection         |
| Penalty                              | -1                | Penalty applied when metadata indicates review/conceptual/bibliometric/editorial item rather than primary empirical evidence              |
| Decision Rule                        | 7-9               | Include - Core synthesis                                                                                                                  |
| Decision Rule                        | 5-6               | Include - Conditional / full-text confirmation                                                                                            |
| Decision Rule                        | 4                 | Reserve - Background/theory only                                                                                                          |
| Decision Rule                        | 0-3               | Exclude - Low fit after QA                                                                                                                |
| Outcome                              | 58                | Include - Core synthesis                                                                                                                  |
| Outcome                              | 21                | Include - Conditional / full-text confirmation                                                                                            |
| Outcome                              | 11                | Reserve - Background/theory only                                                                                                          |
| Outcome                              | 0                 | Exclude - Low fit after QA                                                                                                                |

Note. The quality assessment classified records as core synthesis, conditional full-text, reserve/background, or exclude.

## 2.6 Evidence Extraction

A structured form captured bibliographic, contextual, theoretical, methodological, construct, findings, gap, managerial, thematic, and quality data, enabling systematic comparison across all 79 studies [35] (see Table 5).

**Table 5**  
Evidence extraction framework

| Extraction Domain      | Fields Extracted                                                             | Use in Manuscript                                          |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bibliographic profile  | Authors, year, title, source title, DOI and link.                            | Supports citation management and reference checking.       |
| Contextual profile     | Country/region, industry/context and respondent group.                       | Supports geographical and contextual descriptive analysis. |
| Theoretical profile    | Theory or framework stated in the abstract/metadata.                         | Supports mapping of theoretical foundations.               |
| Methodological profile | Research design, method, analytical technique, and sample size availability. | Supports methodological trend analysis.                    |
| Construct profile      | Digital marketing-related IVs, mediators, moderators and outcomes.           | Supports construct mapping and thematic synthesis.         |
| Evidence profile       | Main findings and relationship patterns.                                     | Supports thematic findings, discussion and implications.   |
| Gap profile            | Research gap/relevance to this study and assigned theme(s).                  | Supports research gap analysis and future research agenda. |
| Quality profile        | QA score, decision and synthesis status.                                     | Supports transparency in evidence inclusion.               |

Note. The extraction framework supports descriptive analysis, thematic synthesis, research gap analysis and discussion.

## **2.7 Data Synthesis**

Descriptive analysis mapped patterns in publications, geography, theory, methods, and constructs. Iterative thematic analysis identified recurring relationships and supported the development of themes, gaps, and future agendas [2,18].

## **2.8 Methodological Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was strengthened through documented workbooks, explicit eligibility rules, structured quality appraisal, transparent classification, and an auditable PRISMA-based process.

## **3. Descriptive Findings**

This section profiles 79 studies (58 core; 21 conditional) before thematic synthesis.

### **3.1 Publication Trend and Recency of Evidence**

Publications increased after 2020 and peaked at 21 in 2025 (26.6%), reflecting rapid development in digital marketing [21,36] (see Table 6 and Figure 2).

**Table 6**  
Publication distribution by year

| Year  | Count | Percentage |
|-------|-------|------------|
| 2015  | 3     | 3.8%       |
| 2016  | 0     | 0.0%       |
| 2017  | 3     | 3.8%       |
| 2018  | 3     | 3.8%       |
| 2019  | 4     | 5.1%       |
| 2020  | 9     | 11.4%      |
| 2021  | 6     | 7.6%       |
| 2022  | 5     | 6.3%       |
| 2023  | 11    | 13.9%      |
| 2024  | 14    | 17.7%      |
| 2025  | 21    | 26.6%      |
| Total | 79    | 100.0%     |

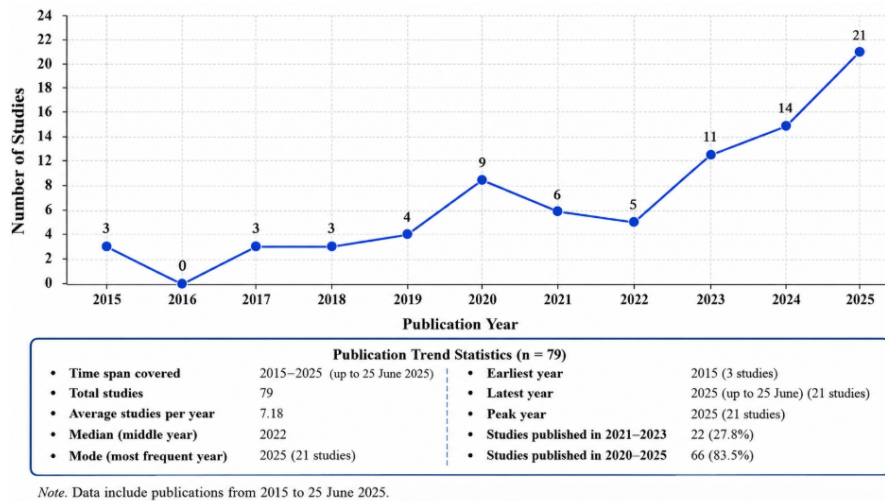


Fig. 2. Publication trend by year (2015-2025)

### 3.2 Publication Outlets and Geographical Distribution

Studies spanned information management, marketing, e-commerce, logistics, tourism, and sustainability. India, Indonesia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand were most visible; only two concerned Malaysia, confirming a contextual gap [27,37] (see Table 7).

**Table 7**  
Geographical distribution of studies

| Country / Region         | Count | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-------|------------|
| China                    | 10    | 12.7%      |
| Country Not Reported     | 12    | 15.2%      |
| Not Applicable           | 9     | 11.4%      |
| India                    | 7     | 8.9%       |
| Indonesia                | 6     | 7.6%       |
| Saudi Arabia             | 3     | 3.8%       |
| Thailand                 | 3     | 3.8%       |
| Vietnam                  | 3     | 3.8%       |
| Bangladesh               | 2     | 2.5%       |
| Malaysia                 | 2     | 2.5%       |
| Other countries/regions† | 22    | 27.8%      |
| Total                    | 79    | 100.0%     |

Note. Country classification was based on the empirical study setting reported in the reviewed articles rather than the authors' institutional affiliations. Review, conceptual, bibliometric, and archival studies without a single empirical setting were classified as Not Applicable. Only studies for which no empirical setting could be established were classified as Country Not Reported. † Includes Brazil, Georgia, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates, and cross-national studies.

### 3.3 Industry and Contextual Distribution

Consumer/marketing and retail/e-commerce dominated, whereas restaurant, food delivery, beverage, and broader F&B studies were scarce [9,38,39] (see Table 8 and Figure 3).

**Table 8**  
Industry/context distribution

| Industry / Context            | Count | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Consumer/marketing context    | 32    | 40.5%      |
| Retail/e-commerce             | 26    | 32.9%      |
| Hospitality/tourism           | 8     | 10.1%      |
| Restaurant/food service       | 5     | 6.3%       |
| Online food delivery/foodtech | 5     | 6.3%       |
| Beverage                      | 2     | 2.5%       |
| F&B/grocery                   | 1     | 1.4%       |
|                               | 79    | 100.0%     |

### 3.4 Theoretical Foundations

Engagement theory, trust theory, and service quality (SERVQUAL) predominated; other theories were uncommon, and 17 studies reported none. This supports integrating engagement, trust, service quality, and SOR. These perspectives respectively explain interaction, credibility, and platform or logistics quality [11,26,40,41](see Table 9).

**Table 9**  
Theoretical foundations used

| Theory/Framework               | Number of Studies | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Engagement theory              | 28                | 35.4%      |
| Trust theory                   | 25                | 31.6%      |
| SERVQUAL                       | 18                | 22.8%      |
| SOR                            | 4                 | 5.1%       |
| TPB                            | 3                 | 3.8%       |
| Brand equity theory            | 2                 | 2.5%       |
| TAM                            | 1                 | 1.3%       |
| UTAUT                          | 1                 | 1.3%       |
| ECT                            | 1                 | 1.3%       |
| Theory not explicitly reported | 17                | 21.5%      |

Note. Multi-response coding was applied

### 3.5 Research Designs, Analytical Methods and Sample Reporting

Quantitative surveys dominated, with SEM, PLS-SEM, and regression commonly used to model satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and repurchase intention [11,42] (see Table 10).

**Table 10**  
Research design and analytical methods

| Method/Analysis                          | Count | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Empirical/unspecified method in abstract | 20    | 25.3%      |
| Survey                                   | 12    | 15.2%      |
| SEM                                      | 5     | 6.3%       |
| SEM; survey                              | 4     | 5.1%       |
| PLS-SEM; SEM                             | 4     | 5.1%       |
| Qualitative                              | 3     | 3.8%       |
| PLS-SEM; SEM; survey                     | 3     | 3.8%       |
| Regression                               | 3     | 3.8%       |
| SEM; survey; quantitative                | 3     | 3.8%       |
| PLS-SEM; survey                          | 3     | 3.8%       |

**Table 10 (Continued)**

| Method/Analysis                               | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Interview; qualitative                        | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Content analysis                              | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Survey; interview; qualitative; quantitative  | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Survey; qualitative; quantitative             | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Survey; qualitative                           | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Regression; survey                            | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Regression; quantitative                      | 1     | 1.3%       |
| SEM; qualitative; quantitative                | 1     | 1.3%       |
| PLS-SEM                                       | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Regression; Content analysis                  | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Qualitative; quantitative                     | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Survey; quantitative                          | 1     | 1.3%       |
| SEM; quantitative                             | 1     | 1.3%       |
| PLS-SEM; interview; qualitative; quantitative | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Experiment; qualitative                       | 1     | 1.3%       |
| PLS-SEM; SEM; Qualitative                     | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Regression; survey; quantitative              | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Experiment                                    | 1     | 1.3%       |
| Interview                                     | 1     | 1.3%       |

### 3.6 Construct and Variable Mapping

Leading constructs were social media marketing, CE, trust, service quality, WU, and eWOM. CS was the main mediator; generational moderators were uncommon. Adoption, purchase intention, satisfaction, loyalty, and continuance were mentioned more frequently than explicit DME [8,14,31](see Table 11).

**Table 11**

#### Construct and variable mapping

| Construct / Variable              | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Social media marketing/engagement | 31    | 39.2%      |
| Customer engagement               | 28    | 35.4%      |
| Trust                             | 26    | 32.9%      |
| Service quality                   | 18    | 22.8%      |
| Website usability                 | 13    | 16.5%      |
| Online reviews/eWOM               | 11    | 13.9%      |
| CSR/sustainability                | 9     | 11.4%      |
| Mobile app interface              | 6     | 7.6%       |
| Digital advertising/content       | 4     | 5.1%       |
| Loyalty programme                 | 4     | 5.1%       |
| Brand equity/image                | 4     | 5.1%       |
| Personalisation                   | 3     | 3.8%       |
| To verify from full text          | 3     | 3.8%       |

### 3.7 Descriptive Bridge to Thematic Synthesis

The literature is recent, multidisciplinary, and quantitative. Satisfaction, SME, and platform quality dominate, while F&B, PER, Gen Z, Malaysia, and explicit DME integration remain limited (see Table 12). These findings underpin the thematic synthesis.

**Table 12**  
Thematic cluster distribution

| Theme                                               | Count | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| T3 Satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes   | 52    | 65.8%      |
| T1 Social media, eWOM and engagement                | 51    | 64.6%      |
| T2 Digital platform quality and technology adoption | 38    | 48.1%      |
| T5 F&B/food delivery consumer behaviour             | 13    | 16.5%      |
| T4 Digital marketing strategy and personalisation   | 11    | 13.9%      |

Note. Themes are non-mutually exclusive.

#### 4. Thematic Findings

Thematic synthesis integrated the 79 studies into five overlapping themes: social media, eWOM and engagement; digital platform quality and technology adoption; satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes; digital marketing strategy and PER; and F&B/food delivery behaviour. The largest clusters were satisfaction and behavioural outcomes ( $n = 52$ ; 65.8%), social media and engagement ( $n = 51$ ; 64.6%), and platform quality and adoption ( $n = 38$ ; 48.1%). F&B/food delivery ( $n = 13$ ; 16.5%) and strategy/PER ( $n = 11$ ; 13.9%) were smaller but central to this review (see Table 13 and Figure 4).

**Table 13**  
Thematic structure of the reviewed studies

| Theme                                                | Frequency | % of Studies | Key Focus                                                                                                   | Relevance to This Study                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T3. Satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes   | 52        | 65.8%        | Satisfaction, loyalty, continuance intention, purchase intention and DME.                                   | Supports CS as the central evaluative mechanism leading to DME.             |
| T1. Social media, eWOM and engagement                | 51        | 64.6%        | Social media marketing, eWOM, user-generated content (UGC), influencer engagement and online communication. | Supports CE and digital interaction among Gen Z consumers.                  |
| T2. Digital platform quality and technology adoption | 38        | 48.1%        | WU, MAI, platform quality, trust and technology adoption.                                                   | Supports the WU and MAI dimensions within the TAM–SOR framework.            |
| T5. F&B and food delivery consumer behaviour         | 13        | 16.5%        | Restaurant, food service, beverage, grocery and online food delivery contexts.                              | Establishes the industry context for Malaysia's F&B sector.                 |
| T4. Digital marketing strategy and PER               | 11        | 13.9%        | PER, digital advertising, promotions, content marketing and LPs.                                            | Supports the strategic digital marketing dimensions examined in this study. |

Note. Themes are non-mutually exclusive because each study may address more than one construct or pathway.

##### 4.1 Social Media, EWOM and Engagement

This theme covers social media marketing, eWOM, UGC, influencers, online communities and CE. Consumers increasingly co-create brand meaning through sharing, reviewing and recommending. Storytelling, promotions and influencer credibility shape engagement and

purchase intention [21,38,43]. While digital communities strengthen recommendation and loyalty [24,44]. Variation in treating social media as a channel, trust mechanism or behavioural stimulus supports clearer construct specification for Gen Z F&B consumers [45], [46-48].

#### *4.2 Digital Platform Quality And Technology Adoption*

This theme integrates WU, MAI, service quality, usefulness, ease of use, trust and adoption. Reliable and convenient platforms improve satisfaction, trust and repurchase intention [9,11,35], while omnichannel integration supports loyalty through satisfaction [6]. For F&B firms, DME therefore depends on both persuasive communication and the quality of websites, applications and delivery platforms [49-52].

#### *4.3 Satisfaction, Loyalty and Behavioural Outcomes*

This dominant theme comprises CS, trust, loyalty, repurchase, continuance, purchase intention, recommendation and DME. CS frequently connects digital experiences with behavioural responses. Satisfaction and trust mediate service quality–repurchase relationships, while e-satisfaction links e-trust with loyalty [11,53]. Food delivery research similarly connects perceptions, motivations, satisfaction and brand outcomes [54]. Despite inconsistent treatment of CS as outcome, mediator or antecedent, the evidence supports positioning it as the organism-level evaluation linking digital stimuli to DME [7,18,31,55,56], [57].

#### *4.4 Digital Marketing Strategy and Personalisation*

This theme examines PER, content marketing, promotions, targeted communication and LP. Artificial intelligence-based PER influences purchase decisions, content strategies affect engagement, and gamified LP enhance CE value [21,26,36]. Because F&B firms combine social media, applications, personalised offers and loyalty initiatives, limited evidence on integrated strategy supports a unified framework [1,2,58,59].

#### *4.5 F&B and Food Delivery Consumer Behaviour*

This theme covers restaurants, beverages, grocery, food delivery and food tech. Its 13 studies address aggregators, mobile service quality, digital supply chains and influencer-driven beverage purchases [9,38,39,60]. The findings confirm increasingly platform-mediated consumption but limited integration of Gen Z, CS, digital strategies and DME, supporting application to Malaysia's F&B context [25,61-63].

#### *4.6 Cross-Theme Integration*

Across the themes, DME emerges as an integrated pathway. Social media represents communication; platform quality and digital infrastructure; strategy and PER, managerial design; CS, trust and CE, internal evaluation; and loyalty, purchase and continuance, response outcomes. This supports a stimulus-organism-response logic in which digital strategies act as stimuli, CS is the central evaluation, and behavioural outcomes indicate DME [9,11,24,26,64].

The synthesis also reveals scarce F&B evidence, limited focus on Gen Z, and inconsistent conceptualisation of CS. Tables 14–16 consolidate the temporal, industry and conceptual relationships.

**Table 14**  
Theme-year matrix

| Theme Code | Theme Name                                       | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Total Theme Appearances |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| T1         | Social media, eWOM and engagement                | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 6    | 4    | 3    | 8    | 11   | 10   | 51                      |
| T2         | Digital platform quality and technology adoption | 2    | 1    | 2    | 2    | 4    | 2    | 3    | 6    | 4    | 12   | 38                      |
| T3         | Satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes   | 2    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 5    | 5    | 3    | 6    | 9    | 16   | 52                      |
| T4         | Digital marketing strategy and PER               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 3    | 3    | 11                      |
| T5         | F&B/food delivery consumer behaviour             | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 3    | 3    | 1    | 13                      |

Note. Theme appearances are non-mutually exclusive; a single study may appear in more than one theme.

**Table 15**  
Theme-industry matrix

| Theme Code | Theme Name                                       | Consumer/ Marketing Context | Retail/ e-commerce | Hospitality/ tourism | Restaurant/ food service | Online food delivery/ foodtech | Beverage | F&B/ grocery | Total Theme Appearances |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| T1         | Social media, eWOM and engagement                | 24                          | 12                 | 7                    | 5                        | 1                              | 2        | 0            | 51                      |
| T2         | Digital platform quality and technology adoption | 13                          | 17                 | 2                    | 2                        | 3                              | 0        | 1            | 38                      |
| T3         | Satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes   | 21                          | 20                 | 4                    | 3                        | 3                              | 0        | 1            | 52                      |
| T4         | Digital marketing strategy and PER               | 7                           | 3                  | 1                    | 0                        | 0                              | 0        | 0            | 11                      |
| T5         | F&B/food delivery consumer behaviour             | 0                           | 0                  | 0                    | 5                        | 5                              | 2        | 1            | 13                      |

Note. Industry categories are based on the Phase 6 evidence extraction coding.

**Table 16**  
Conceptual synthesis from thematic findings

| SLR Synthesis Layer                   | Relevant Constructs/ Concepts                                                        | Supporting Theme(s) | Manuscript-ready Interpretation                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stimulus/Digital Marketing Strategies | WU, MAI, CE, SME, PER, LP                                                            | T1, T2, T4, T5      | Digital marketing actions and platform features serve as stimuli that shape Gen Z's evaluation of F&B brands.             |
| Organism/Internal Evaluation          | CS, trust, engagement, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use                   | T2, T3              | CS is the central psychological/evaluative mechanism linking digital strategies to effectiveness.                         |
| Response/Marketing Outcomes           | DME, purchase intention, loyalty, continuance, recommendation, behavioural intention | T3                  | DME may be understood in terms of behavioural and perceptual outcomes.                                                    |
| Contextual Boundary                   | Gen Z, Malaysia, F&B, online food delivery, restaurant and food service settings     | T5                  | The review should emphasise that many existing studies are adjacent rather than directly located in this precise context. |

Note. This table translates the thematic synthesis into the conceptual logic supporting this proposed study.

## 5. Research Gap Analysis

### 5.1 Overview of the Gap Analysis

The thematic synthesis shows that digital marketing research addresses SME, platform quality, loyalty, e-commerce, and online food delivery. However, evidence remains fragmented regarding this review's focus on digital marketing strategies, CS, and DME among Gen Z consumers in Malaysia's F&B industry. The 79 studies cover UGC, influencers, digital service quality, LP, delivery platforms, and CS, but rarely integrate these into a single framework [1,2]. Five gaps emerged. Malaysia-specific evidence was absent from 77 studies, 76 did not isolate Gen Z, and 65 were outside F&B or food delivery. The role of CS remained unclear in 45 studies, while methods relied mainly on cross-sectional self-reports. The literature is therefore dispersed across contexts, cohorts, sectors, mechanisms, and methods (see Table 17). This review derives the gaps systematically from accumulated evidence, creating a transparent basis for subsequent conceptual and empirical development.

**Table 17**  
Summary of research gaps

| Gap | Gap Area       | Evidence Signal                                                           | Research Implication                                                               |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G1  | Contextual     | Limited Malaysia-specific evidence; 77 studies were not Malaysia-based.   | Validate digital marketing frameworks in the Malaysian F&B context.                |
| G2  | Cohort         | Limited explicit Gen Z focus; 76 studies did not isolate Gen Z.           | Examine Gen Z as a distinct digital consumer cohort.                               |
| G3  | Sectoral       | Limited F&B-specific evidence; 65 studies were outside F&B/food delivery. | Strengthen F&B-specific model testing.                                             |
| G4  | Conceptual     | CS role unclear in 45 studies.                                            | Position CS clearly as the evaluative mechanism linking digital strategies to DME. |
| G5  | Methodological | Evidence is dominated by cross-sectional and self-reported designs.       | Use longitudinal, experimental, behavioural analytics and mixed-method designs.    |

Note. Gap counts are based on extraction coding where available; the methodological gap is synthesised qualitatively from the evidence base.

### *5.2 Contextual Gap: Limited Malaysia-Specific Evidence*

Malaysia-specific evidence is limited. Most studies were conducted elsewhere or omitted country information at the abstract level. Evidence from other settings explains service quality, trust, satisfaction, convenience, and repurchase behaviour [7,9,11,37], but not Malaysia's cultural and competitive environment. Only two studies were coded as Malaysian: research examined online food delivery capabilities and CS [39] and social media and environmental awareness [65]. Neither explains how Malaysian Gen Z consumers evaluate integrated F&B digital marketing strategies [66-68].

### *5.3 Cohort Gap: Limited Explicit Focus on Generation Z*

Explicit Gen Z evidence is scarce. Many studies examine students, young consumers, or frequent internet users, including work on promotions, beverage influencers, digital communities, and parasocial engagement [21,38,43,44]. However, these groups are not equivalent to Gen Z, which engages through short-form content, peer reviews, applications, personalised offers, and digital loyalty features. Earlier Gen Y and millennial studies cannot fully explain Gen Z behaviour [64,69], requiring a dedicated cohort lens [27,70-72].

### *5.4 Sectoral Gap: Limited F&B-Specific Integration*

F&B evidence is fragmented across mobile food ordering, fast-food social media, online delivery, beverages, service quality, and digital supply chains [7-9,25,39]. Other studies examine CSR or influencer effects on beverage purchases [38,54]. This separation limits theory and managerial decision-making because F&B firms manage websites, applications, social media, PER, and LP concurrently [60,73,74].

### *5.5 Conceptual Gap: Fragmented Treatment of Customer Satisfaction*

The fourth gap concerns the inconsistent role assigned to CS. Some studies treat satisfaction as an outcome of service innovation, logistics quality, or digital capability, whereas others model it as a mediator of reuse, repurchase, or loyalty [7,11,37,39,53]. Consequently, CS may emerge from digital strategies, serve as a bridge between digital experience and loyalty, or function as a mechanism linking platform quality to behavioural intention. Few studies clearly position it as the central process by which integrated digital marketing strategies influence DME. This conceptual gap directly supports NA's proposed model [18,31].

### *5.6 Theoretical and Methodological Gaps*

The evidence also reveals theoretical and methodological fragmentation. SOR explains brand-community responses; trust perspectives dominate e-commerce; service quality theories support platform studies; and engagement frameworks appear in LP, UGC, and social media analytics research [14,24,26,35,75]. Few studies integrate digital stimuli, consumer evaluation, and effectiveness outcomes. Cross-sectional surveys and SEM or PLS-SEM predominate, offering limited temporal insight. Experiments, longitudinal designs, behavioural analytics, and mixed-methods would strengthen causal understanding [9,76-79].

### **5.7 Integrated Gap Statement and Implications for this Study**

Together, the gaps reveal one limitation: prior research explains individual mechanisms but not how multiple strategies jointly affect CS and DME among Malaysian Gen Z F&B consumers. UGC, influencers, service quality, mobile ordering, LP, WU, and platform convenience are usually examined separately across sectors, countries, and cohorts. The review therefore supports a context-specific framework linking integrated strategies to CS and DME. This matters because digital outcomes depend on visibility, interaction quality, platform ease of use, PER, loyalty incentives, and satisfaction across touchpoints [5,8,14,80,81].

### **5.8 Section Summary**

Five interconnected gaps were identified: limited Malaysian evidence, inadequate Gen Z focus, weak F&B integration, fragmented treatment of CS, and restricted methodological diversity. The next section translates these findings into a focused research agenda and practical priorities for F&B managers [1,2].

## **6. Future Research Agenda**

Future digital marketing research should examine specialised market segments and service contexts rather than broad consumer settings. Although the reviewed studies show strong interest in social media marketing, platform quality, CS, loyalty, continuance intention, and purchase behaviour, the evidence remains uneven. The priority is therefore not merely to increase study volume, but to develop context-sensitive models that connect digital marketing strategy dimensions with customer evaluation and DME [1,2] within specific industry settings.

First, future research should prioritise empirical validation in Malaysia's F&B industry. According to the review, food-related digital contexts have attracted increasing attention, particularly in online food delivery service quality, fast-food social media marketing, mobile food ordering apps, and food delivery platforms [7,8,9,39]. However, these studies remain scattered across platform types and national contexts. Therefore, future studies should test integrated models within Malaysia's F&B ecosystem, including eateries, cafes, quick-service restaurants, food delivery services, and hybrid dine-in/digital ordering experiences. This would enable researchers and professionals to determine whether conclusions from more general studies on e-commerce and hospitality apply to Malaysian F&B customers.

Second, as a unique cohort of digital consumers, Gen Z deserves more attention. Although many studies show the value of generational or youth-focused analysis, only a small percentage of the reviewed studies specifically isolate Gen Z. For instance, research on university students' social media responses and South Asian Gen Z omnichannel retailing indicates that younger consumers assess digital content, engagement, and purchase decisions differently than general consumer samples [21,27]. Therefore, future research should examine whether Gen Z consumers respond differently to WU, MAI, CE, SME, PER, and LP than millennials or older consumers [70,72].

Third, future research should clarify CS's role in digital marketing models. Satisfaction appears as an outcome, a mediator, and a driver of behavioural intention in various ways across the reviewed studies. Evidence from omnichannel retailing, e-commerce returns

service quality, mobile food ordering apps, and e-trust/e-loyalty studies demonstrates that satisfaction often serves as a key evaluative mechanism connecting digital service experiences to continuation, repurchase, and loyalty outcomes [6,7,11,53]. Future research should therefore explicitly test CS as a mediator between digital marketing strategies and DME, rather than treating it only as a standalone outcome.

Fourth, DME should be operationalised more consistently. The reviewed literature uses multiple proxies, including purchase intention, repurchase intention, continuance intention, recommendation, loyalty, engagement value, online recommendation and brand-related outcomes [26,31,82]. This diversity reflects the multifaceted nature of digital marketing, but it also makes cross-study comparisons more difficult. Future research should develop a more precise taxonomy of outcomes that distinguishes among relational, behavioural, and perceptual effectiveness. This would assist organisations in assessing whether digital marketing investments enhance CS, repeat business, engagement, recommendation, and perceived brand performance for oriented and managerial research [16,18].

Fifth, future studies should look at how privacy, trust, and PER interact. While excessive PER may increase intrusiveness and privacy concerns, it can also increase relevance and purchase intention [5]. Similarly, studies on personal data sharing, trust transfer, WU and social media communities suggest that consumers' digital responses are influenced not only by convenience and usefulness but also by trust, security and perceived risk [75,78,80,81]. Therefore, future F&B research should examine how PER can be used without undermining trust, particularly in digital LP, location-based promotions, and app-based ordering. Future studies should operationalise DME as a multidimensional construct by incorporating both behavioural and performance indicators, including conversion rates, click-through rates, CE, repeat purchase intention, customer retention, and customer loyalty. Greater consistency in operationalising DME would improve comparability across studies and support cumulative theory development.

Lastly, future studies should use more advanced methodological designs. Most studies in the review use structural equation modelling and cross-sectional surveys. These designs limit causal inference and may not accurately reflect evolving digital journeys, even though they help test theories. To compare various consumer segments and digital touchpoints, future research could use longitudinal designs, experimental approaches, multi-group analyses, configurational techniques such as fsQCA, or mixed-methods designs [43,76,77]. These methods would strengthen theoretical justification and yield more practical outcomes for F&B managers (see Table 18).

**Table 18**  
Future research agenda

| Future Research Direction        | Recommended Approach                                                                                       | Expected Contribution                                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Malaysia-specific F&B validation | Test digital marketing strategies → CS → DME in restaurants, cafes, food delivery and hybrid F&B settings. | Improves contextual relevance and sector-specific managerial usefulness. |
| Gen Z segmentation               | Compare Gen Z with millennials or older consumers using multi-group analysis.                              | Clarifies whether digital expectations are generation-specific.          |

**Table 18 (Continued)**

| Future Research Direction       | Recommended Approach                                                               | Expected Contribution                                                      |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CS as mediator                  | Position CS as the evaluative mechanism linking digital strategies to DME.         | Resolves inconsistencies in the treatment of satisfaction in prior models. |
| DME taxonomy                    | Measure effectiveness through perceptual, behavioural and relational outcomes.     | Improves comparability across future studies.                              |
| PER, trust and privacy          | Examine beneficial and intrusive effects of PER in app-based and loyalty contexts. | Supports responsible digital marketing design.                             |
| Advanced methodological designs | Use longitudinal, experimental, fsQCA, mixed-method or multi-group approaches.     | Strengthens causal explanation and practical insight.                      |

Note. The agenda translates the identified gaps into actionable directions for future empirical research.

## 7. Discussion and Implications

This SLR synthesised 79 studies on digital marketing strategies, CS, and DME. DME arises from interconnected social media communication, platform quality, engagement, PER, trust, service quality, and loyalty mechanisms rather than a single channel. Interactive environments shape participation, while the quality of websites and mobile platforms influences satisfaction, trust, and reuse intentions [7,24,64,81].

### 7.1 Integration of Digital Marketing Strategy and Consumer Response

Digital marketing strategies function as stimuli that generate behavioural responses. Social media, influencers, and UG influence engagement, recommendation, eWOM, and purchase intention through credibility and relevance [8,38,43,44]. Platform usability, application quality, e-service quality, and convenience likewise affect CS, trust, continuance, and repurchase [7,9,11,42]. Persuasive campaigns therefore cannot compensate for poor navigation, ordering, fulfilment, or service. DME is treated as the response to communication and service delivery, with CS converting digital stimuli into outcomes.

### 7.2 Customer Satisfaction As The Central Evaluative Mechanism

The strongest pattern is the relationship among CS, loyalty, and behavioural outcomes. Evidence from mobile ordering, social commerce, logistics, and online services links satisfaction with reuse, repurchase, recommendation, and loyalty [7,11,31,53]. CS is therefore an evaluative bridge rather than merely a final outcome. Loyalty programme research similarly shows that digital initiatives are effective when consumers perceive meaningful benefits [26,73].

### 7.3 Theoretical Contribution of The Review

The review integrates SOR, engagement theory, trust theory, SERVQUAL, and technology adoption perspectives into a stimulus-evaluation-response explanation. Digital content, interaction, PER, WU, MAI, and loyalty mechanisms constitute stimuli; CS, trust, engagement, usefulness, and ease of use represent evaluations; and loyalty, purchase, continuance, and recommendation indicate DME [23,24]. This integration extends digital marketing beyond promotion and supports testing CS as a mediator.

Although TAM explains consumers' acceptance of digital platforms through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, it primarily addresses technology adoption rather than post-adoption behavioural outcomes. In contrast, the SOR framework provides a broader behavioural explanation by conceptualising digital marketing strategies as external stimuli, CS as the internal evaluative mechanism, and DME as the resulting behavioural response. Engagement Theory complements this perspective by explaining how interactive digital experiences strengthen emotional and behavioural connections between consumers and brands, whereas SERVQUAL highlights the importance of perceived service quality in shaping customer satisfaction. Collectively, these theories provide complementary rather than competing explanations, offering a more comprehensive understanding of DME among Gen Z consumers.

### 7.4 Managerial Implications for F&B Practitioners

F&B practitioners should manage an integrated customer journey rather than isolated channels. Social media, websites, applications, ordering systems, PER, and LP should jointly support awareness, purchase, satisfaction, and advocacy [7,8,25]. In Malaysia, global franchises, local brands, cafes, hawkers, mamak restaurants, delivery platforms, mobile payments, and halal-certified services heighten the importance of trust, cultural relevance, and service quality [39,83]. PER should improve convenience without becoming intrusive, particularly for Gen Z consumers [5,36]. Table 19 presents actionable priorities.

**Table 19**  
Managerial diagnostic checklist for Malaysian F&B owners

| Digital Marketing Area | Practical Checklist                                                                                    | Expected Customer Outcome                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Social Media           | Maintain a consistent posting schedule using short-form videos, stories and customer-generated content | Higher engagement and brand awareness             |
| Website & Mobile App   | Ensure fast loading, intuitive navigation and mobile responsiveness                                    | Improved WU and CS                                |
| PER                    | Recommend products using previous purchases while respecting privacy                                   | Higher perceived relevance and purchase intention |
| Loyalty Programme      | Introduce digital rewards, referral incentives and birthday promotions                                 | Stronger repeat purchase and customer loyalty     |
| Online Reviews         | Monitor reviews daily and respond professionally within 24 hours                                       | Increased trust and brand credibility             |
| Influencer Marketing   | Collaborate with credible local micro-influencers aligned with the brand                               | Greater purchase intention among Gen Z            |
| Customer Satisfaction  | Measure satisfaction regularly using post-purchase surveys or quick response feedback                  | Continuous service improvement                    |

**Table 19 (Continued)**

| Digital Marketing Area | Practical Checklist                                                   | Expected Customer Outcome |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Analytics              | Track engagement, conversion, repeat purchases and customer retention | Better evaluation of DME  |

### 7.5 Limitations of the Review

The review has four limitations. Most studies were not specific to Malaysia, Gen Z, or F&B; DME used diverse outcomes; and Scopus may have excluded studies indexed elsewhere. Future research should test the proposed relationships in Malaysia's Gen Z F&B market. Table 20 summarises the implications.

**Table 20**

Integrated discussion and implications matrix

| Synthesis Point                       | Evidence Signal                                                                              | Interpretation                                                                              | Implication for This Study                                        |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Digital marketing is multidimensional | Social media, UGC, influencers, websites, apps, and loyalty mechanisms recur across studies. | Effectiveness depends on integrated digital touchpoints, not on a single isolated strategy. | Supports a multi-construct model of digital marketing strategies. |
| Satisfaction is the evaluative bridge | Satisfaction, loyalty and behavioural outcomes appear in 52 studies.                         | CS converts digital experiences into behavioural outcomes.                                  | Supports CS as a mediator.                                        |
| Platform quality matters              | WU, app quality, e-service quality and logistics quality are recurring antecedents.          | DME requires reliable digital service delivery.                                             | Supports WU and MAI dimensions.                                   |
| Contextual evidence remains limited   | Most studies are not Malaysia-, Gen Z- or F&B-specific.                                      | A contextual gap remains despite broad international evidence.                              | Justifies this empirical focus on Malaysia Gen Z F&B.             |

Note. This matrix summarises how descriptive, thematic, and gap findings support the empirical study's positioning.

## 8. Conclusion

This SLR synthesised 79 studies to explain how digital marketing strategies influence CS and DME. The evidence shows that DME is shaped by connected digital touchpoints rather than isolated promotional tools. Social media, influencer communication, online communities, website quality, MAI, PER, LP, and platform service quality collectively influence engagement, trust, purchase intention, continuance, loyalty, and repurchase behaviour [38,44,64,84].

The review identifies CS as the central evaluative mechanism linking digital experiences with behavioural outcomes. Evidence from mobile food ordering, e-commerce logistics, e-trust, e-loyalty, and online service quality demonstrates that satisfactory experiences strengthen continuance, recommendation, loyalty, and repurchase intentions [7,11,37,53]. Digital marketing therefore creates value when it improves the overall customer experience, not merely online visibility.

The findings also reveal limited integration of Gen Z, Malaysia, and the F&B industry. Existing food-related studies address mobile ordering, food delivery service quality, fast-food

social media marketing, and beverage influencers, but remain fragmented across constructs and national settings [8,9]. Theoretically, the review integrates stimulus-response, technology adoption, engagement, trust, and satisfaction perspectives, conceptualising digital strategies as stimuli, CS as evaluation, and behavioural outcomes as responses [23,24].

For practitioners, effective digital marketing requires engaging content, seamless platforms, responsible PER, and meaningful loyalty benefits. Future research should test the relationships among integrated digital strategy, CS, and DME among Malaysian Gen Z consumers in the F&B sector using stronger longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-methods designs. Such studies should also examine privacy, cultural relevance, app usability, influencer credibility, and service recovery across customer journeys, while distinguishing perceptual, relational, and behavioural indicators of effectiveness to improve theoretical precision and managerial decision-making.

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