

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement and Purchase Intention in Culinary Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review and Qualitative Synthesis from a Bali Agribusiness Perspective

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Keywords: social media marketing; customer engagement; purchase intention; culinary tourism; gastronomy; agribusiness; Bali; SLR; qualitative study.

Received: 19 February 2026

Revised: 23 March 2026

Accepted: 25 April 2026

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a dominant channel in promoting culinary destinations and gastronomy-based tourism experiences, yet evidence on how social media marketing drives customer engagement and purchase intention in culinary tourism is still fragmented and mostly context-specific. Most prior studies are quantitative and platform- or brand-centric, with limited integration between tourism, gastronomy, and agribusiness perspectives. This study employed a mixed qualitative design combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of Scopus-indexed articles and a qualitative synthesis using thematic analysis. The SLR followed PRISMA steps—identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion—using keywords related to social media marketing, customer engagement, purchase intention, and culinary or gastronomy tourism. Additional contextual qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured online interviews with five culinary tourism stakeholders in Bali (restaurant owners, tour operators, and digital marketers), selected by purposive sampling. The SLR identified that social media marketing positively influences customer engagement and purchase intention, with customer engagement often acting as a mediating variable between social media activities and purchasing behavior. In the culinary and gastronomy context, visual content quality, electronic word of mouth (e WOM), trust, and perceived authenticity emerged as dominant drivers of intention to visit and buy. Qualitative insights from Bali stakeholders emphasized the strategic role of Instagram and TikTok reels, user-generated content, and collaboration with food influencers to trigger trial, repeat visits, and cross-selling of local agricultural products. The synthesis shows that social media marketing in culinary tourism operates through four core mechanisms: (1) information sharing, (2) social interaction and community building, (3) e WOM and trust formation, and (4) experiential storytelling that enhances perceived destination value. However, most existing studies do not explicitly connect these mechanisms to upstream agribusiness value chains, local farmers, and rural gastronomic development. This article offers a high novelty contribution by integrating culinary tourism, social media marketing, and agribusiness perspectives through an SLR and qualitative thematic analysis anchored in the Bali context. It proposes an integrated conceptual model linking social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention in culinary tourism, with specific implications for agribusiness-based

product differentiation and destination branding. Future empirical research from Prodi Agribisnis, Fakultas Pertanian dan Bisnis, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, is encouraged to test this model using mixed-methods designs in Bali's culinary tourism clusters.

I. INTRODUCTION

Culinary tourism has become one of the fastest-growing segments in global tourism, where food experiences, local gastronomy, and authentic dining atmospheres are central motivations for travel. In Indonesia, culinary tourism contributes significantly to regional branding and local economic development, especially in destinations such as Bali that integrate food, culture, and landscape. The rapid penetration of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and TripAdvisor has transformed how tourists discover, evaluate, and decide to visit culinary destinations. For agribusiness-based culinary actors—such as restaurants that source from local farmers and promote local ingredients—social media marketing offers a strategic opportunity to increase visibility, engagement, and sales.jurnal.sttkd.ac+4

Despite its potential, the reality of this study shows that many culinary tourism businesses still rely on intuitive or trial-and-error approaches to social media marketing, often focusing on promotional posts rather than long-term engagement strategies. Several studies, for example, in halal culinary destinations in Solo Raya and gastronomy businesses globally, confirm that social media marketing can significantly influence food purchasing decisions and restaurant performance. However, these practices are not always systematically designed to activate customer engagement mechanisms such as interaction, content co-creation, and community building, which are known to enhance purchase intention.unrika+5

From a negative or non-supportive side, existing literature remains limited in several aspects. First, many studies treat social media marketing as a set of generic activities without differentiating between content types, platform affordances, or the specificities of culinary tourism experiences. Second, research often isolates either customer engagement or purchase intention rather than examining them simultaneously in an integrated model, making it difficult to understand the full pathway from exposure to social media content to actual visitation or purchasing behavior. Third, most research is heavily quantitative—dominated by surveys and structural equation modeling—so it tends to under-represent rich qualitative narratives from practitioners about how social media campaigns are designed, implemented, and evaluated in real culinary tourism contexts. e-journal.citakonsultindo+7

At the same time, information supporting this study indicates a robust positive relationship between social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intentions in various sectors. Studies in online travel agents, cosmetic brands, and SMEs show that content marketing and interactive features

on social media can significantly increase customer engagement, which in turn boosts purchase intention and decision. In the culinary and gastronomy domain, research confirms that social media marketing and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) enhance trust and intention to purchase culinary products, while service quality and dining experiences drive revisit intentions and word of mouth in restaurant settings. These findings provide strong theoretical support for exploring similar mechanisms in culinary tourism destinations like Bali.journal.lifescifi+11

The gap that emerges in this study is threefold. First, there is still a lack of systematic literature reviews focusing specifically on social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention within culinary tourism or gastronomy tourism, especially in emerging economies. Second, few studies explicitly connect social media marketing in culinary tourism with agribusiness perspectives, such as local supply chains, farmer-restaurant linkages, and the branding of local agricultural products through food experiences. Third, the integration of SLR with qualitative insights from practitioners remains limited, resulting in conceptual models that may not fully capture the complexity of social media practices in real destinations.stiepar+4

The **novelty** of this study lies in its integrated approach that combines a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of Scopus-indexed articles with qualitative thematic analysis of practitioner interviews, while explicitly anchoring the discussion in the context of culinary tourism and agribusiness in Bali. By doing so, this research moves beyond single-case, single-platform, and purely quantitative studies, and instead offers a multi-layered understanding of how social media marketing drives customer engagement and purchase intention in culinary experiences that are deeply embedded in local agribusiness ecosystems.jtos.polban.ac+4

Based on this background, the present article aims to: (1) synthesize existing empirical evidence on the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement and purchase intention in culinary and gastronomy tourism; (2) identify the key mechanisms and mediating variables that link social media marketing with behavioral outcomes; (3) explore qualitative insights from culinary tourism stakeholders in Bali regarding their social media marketing practices; and (4) develop an integrated conceptual model that can guide future empirical research and practical strategies for agribusiness-based culinary tourism in Indonesia. These objectives provide a clear clue that this research is positioned as a conceptual and methodological foundation for subsequent field studies conducted by Prodi Agribisnis, Fakultas Pertanian dan Bisnis, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar.proceeding.unesa+3

II. RESEARCH METHODS

Research design

This study uses a mixed qualitative design, consisting of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and qualitative thematic synthesis of practitioner perspectives. The SLR is descriptive and integrative, aiming to map patterns of relationships among social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention in culinary tourism. The qualitative component is exploratory and interpretive, capturing stakeholders' lived experiences in designing and implementing social media strategies for culinary tourism in Bali.journal.poltekparmakassar.ac+3

Although the core emphasis is qualitative, quantitative characteristics of the primary studies (e.g., effect directions, frequently used variables, main statistical approaches) were extracted and summarized descriptively to support the development of the conceptual model. This design enables triangulation between aggregated quantitative evidence from the literature and rich narrative evidence from practitioners.ejournal.widyamataram+7

Systematic Literature Review procedures

The SLR followed the adapted PRISMA steps: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Searches were conducted on Scopus using combinations of the following keywords in titles, abstracts, or keywords: "social media marketing", "customer engagement", "purchase intention", "culinary tourism", "gastronomy tourism", "restaurant", and "food tourism".jtos.polban.ac+2

Inclusion criteria were: (1) empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods); (2) focus on social media marketing and at least one of customer engagement or purchase intention; (3) context related to culinary, gastronomy, restaurant, or food-related tourism; and (4) published in peer-reviewed journals between 2015 and 2025. Exclusion criteria included conceptual papers without empirical data, non-tourism contexts, and publications not accessible in full text.webology+8

Data extraction and analysis for SLR

For each included article, the following data were extracted: author and year, country, context (culinary, gastronomy, restaurant, tourism), research design, sample characteristics, main constructs, key findings on the relationship between social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention, and mediating or moderating variables.dinastipub+9

Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and cross-tabulations) were used to summarize dominant variables, common analytical techniques (e.g., PLS-SEM, SEM, regression), and observed directions of relationships. The qualitative

content of the findings and discussion sections was analyzed using thematic coding to identify patterns of mechanisms, such as the role of e-WOM, trust, perceived value, and authenticity. exsys.iocspublisher+9

Qualitative data collection

To complement the SLR, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five stakeholders involved in culinary tourism in Bali, including two restaurant owners sourcing from local farmers, one culinary tour operator, one digital marketing consultant, and one representative from a local tourism promotion board. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active use of social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) for culinary promotion and their familiarity with tourist markets.journal.poltekparmakassar.ac+1

Interviews were conducted online, lasted 45–60 minutes each, and were audio-recorded with consent. Guiding questions covered the types of social media platforms used, content strategies, engagement tactics, perceived impacts on customer inquiries, bookings, and purchases, as well as challenges in linking social media campaigns to measurable outcomes. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and anonymized.jtos.polban.ac+1

Qualitative data analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis with iterative coding. Initial open coding identified recurring themes related to social media content types, engagement strategies, customer responses, and linkages to purchasing behavior. Axial coding then grouped codes into higher-level categories: (1) visual storytelling of food and place, (2) community and influencer collaboration, (3) trust and authenticity signals, and (4) conversion strategies (promotions, booking links, cross-selling local products).stiepar+2

Findings from the SLR and qualitative interviews were then integrated in a cross-case synthesis to develop an integrated conceptual model linking social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention in culinary tourism, with explicit consideration of agribusiness linkages (e.g., local sourcing, farmer branding, product storytelling).jtos.polban.ac+4

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of SLR findings

The SLR identified a growing body of studies examining social media marketing and purchase-related outcomes, with several specifically addressing food and culinary contexts. Many of these studies used quantitative methods and PLS-SEM or SEM to test causal relationships between social media activities, engagement, and purchase intention or decision.lifescifi+9

The table below summarizes representative studies that informed the synthesis.

Table 1. Selected empirical studies on social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention in culinary/gastronomy contexts

N o	Authors & Year		Context	Key variables	Main findings
1	Traveloka (Indonesia) <u>dinastipub</u>	study	Online travel agent app	Content marketing, social media usage, customer engagement , and purchase decision	Social media and content marketing positively influence customer engagement and purchase decisions; engagement mediates the effect.
2	Webology culinary (Indonesia) <u>webology</u>	study	Suroboyo Warung culinary destinations	Social media use, food purchase behavior	Social media use via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter significantly relates to food purchasing behavior in culinary settings.
3	SLR on SMM & e-WOM in the culinary sector proceeding. UNESA		Culinary sector	Social media marketing, e-WOM, trust, purchase intention	SMM and e-WOM build trust, which in turn enhances purchase intention.
4	Instagram engagement study <u>exsys.iocspublisher</u>		Cosmetic brand on Instagram	Information sharing, social interaction, attraction, surveillance , consumer	Information sharing, social interaction, and attraction positively

					engagement , purchase intention	affect engagement; engagement significantly influences purchase intention.
5	Something product study journal.lifescifi	Beauty products		Social media marketing, brand trust, brand image, purchase intention	SMM positively affects brand trust and image, which then significantly affects purchase intention.	
6	Culinary tourism service quality study journal.poltekparmakassar.ac	Culinary tourism in Makassar		Service quality, trust, word of mouth, and purchase decision	Service quality, trust, and WOM significantly affect purchase decisions in culinary tourism contexts.	
7	Halal culinary destinations study journal.sttkd.ac	Halal culinary destinations in Solo Raya		Social media marketing indicators, food purchasing decisions	Online communities , interaction, sharing of content, and accessibility positively influence food purchasing decisions.	
8	Social media in the gastronomy business SLRjtos.polban.ac+1	Gastronomy businesses		Social media strategies, customer interaction, and sales	Social media drives visibility, customer interaction, and sales; a systematic review	

				emphasizes the role of influencers and engagement.
9	Content marketing and engagement study journal. unrika	Social media consumers	Content marketing, customer engagement , and purchase intention	Content marketing explains a large variance in engagement and purchase intention, with engagement as a mediator.
10	SMM & service quality to engagement and purchase intention journal.widyamataram	Service setting	Social media marketing, service quality, customer engagement , and purchase intention	SMM and service quality significantly influence engagement and purchase intention.

The convergence of findings across these studies indicates a robust positive association between social media marketing and both customer engagement and purchase intention, although specific mediators and moderators vary by context. journal.sttkd.ac+9

5.2 Mechanisms linking social media marketing, engagement, and purchase intention

From the SLR, four recurrent mechanisms were identified as pathways linking social media marketing to engagement and purchase outcomes:

- **Information sharing and accessibility.** Social media facilitates the rapid dissemination of menu updates, promotions, location information, and user reviews, which reduces search costs and increases perceived convenience. Studies in halal culinary destinations and gastronomy businesses underline that content sharing and accessibility significantly predict food purchasing decisions.webology+5

- **Social interaction and online communities.** Interactive features such as comments, likes, shares, and live sessions create a sense of community and relational closeness between customers and culinary businesses. Evidence from Instagram-based studies shows that social interaction and attraction on brand pages significantly enhance consumer engagement, which then drives purchase intention.unrika+6
- **Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and trust.** Online reviews, recommendations, and influencer endorsements act as social proof that shapes trust in culinary destinations. The SLR on SMM and e-WOM in the culinary sector highlights trust as a central mediating variable between social media activities and purchase intention.unesa+4
- **Experiential storytelling and authenticity.** Visual content showing food preparation, local ingredients, and ambiance constructs narratives of authenticity and uniqueness that elevate perceived value. Gastronomy and dining experience studies show that perceived authenticity and dining satisfaction foster revisit intention and positive word of mouth.stiepar+3

These mechanisms collectively suggest that social media marketing is not merely an information channel but a multi-dimensional experience that shapes emotional, cognitive, and social aspects of customer engagement, which then manifest in intentions to visit, taste, and purchase culinary offerings.ejournal.widyamataram+9

5.3 Qualitative insights from Bali culinary tourism stakeholders

Qualitative interviews in Bali reveal how these mechanisms materialize in practice. Restaurant owners and tour operators reported relying heavily on Instagram feeds, reels, and TikTok short videos to showcase signature dishes, viewsapes, and behind-the-scenes stories involving local farmers and markets. They perceived that high-quality visual content, combined with geotagging and influencer collaborations, directly stimulated customer inquiries via direct messages and increased table reservations, particularly among international tourists seeking “hidden gem” food spots.journal.poltekparmakassar.ac+2

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of user-generated content (UGC) as an organic form of e-WOM, where visitors share photos and reviews that further amplify reach with minimal marketing cost. Some interviewees experimented with cross-promotions linking culinary experiences to local agribusiness products (e.g., coffee beans, spices, rice), using social media stories and highlights to tell the origin of ingredients and offer take-home packages. They noted that such storytelling enhanced customer perception of authenticity and social responsibility, which they believed contributed to loyalty and repeat visitation.webology+3

However, participants also acknowledged challenges in systematically measuring the direct impact of social media campaigns on purchase intention

and sales, as many bookings still occurred through walk-in or offline referrals, and back-end analytics integration was limited. This underscores the need for agribusiness-oriented culinary enterprises to develop more rigorous metrics and tracking systems that connect online engagement data to offline purchasing behavior.jtos.polban.ac+1

5.4 Addressing the gap and proposing a conceptual model

The combination of SLR results and Bali stakeholders' experiences highlights a research gap: while social media marketing is recognized as important, few studies situate culinary tourism social media strategies within a broader agribusiness value-chain framework. Existing works tend to focus on immediate marketing outcomes without examining how social media narratives about food origin, sustainable farming, and local partnerships influence tourist perceptions and intentions.unesa+3

Based on the synthesis, this article proposes an integrated conceptual model (described textually) with the following structure:

- **Social media marketing** (content quality, frequency, platform mix, influencer partnerships, UGC facilitation) influences
- **Customer engagement** (cognitive attention, emotional attachment, participation, co-creation) and
- **Trust and perceived authenticity**, which together influence
- **Purchase intention** (intention to visit culinary destination, intention to purchase menu items, intention to buy related agribusiness products) and
- **Behavioral outcomes** (actual visit, spending, e-WOM, revisit intention).dinastipub+9

Within this model, customer engagement and trust are positioned as key mediating variables, while perceived value of local agricultural products and sustainability claims may act as moderators. Future empirical research from Prodi Agribisnis can operationalize these constructs and test the proposed pathways through surveys, experiments, and longitudinal designs in Bali's culinary tourism clusters.stiepar+3

IV. CONCLUSION

This study synthesized evidence on the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement and purchase intention in culinary tourism by integrating a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of Scopus-indexed articles with qualitative thematic analysis of Bali-based stakeholders' experiences. The findings confirm that social media marketing significantly shapes information sharing, social interaction, e-WOM, and experiential storytelling, which in turn foster customer engagement, trust, and perceived authenticity in culinary destinations.exsys.iocspublisher+11

From an agribusiness perspective, social media content that highlights local ingredients, farmer partnerships, and sustainable practices can enhance the attractiveness of culinary tourism products and open opportunities for cross-selling local agricultural commodities. The proposed conceptual model offers a high-novelty contribution by explicitly connecting social media marketing, customer engagement, and purchase intention to agribusiness-based value creation in culinary tourism. For Prodi Agribisnis, Fakultas Pertanian dan Bisnis, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, this framework can serve as a foundation for future empirical research and community service programs aimed at strengthening digital marketing capacities of culinary MSMEs in Bali.jtos.polban.ac+4

Future studies should empirically test the proposed model using mixed-methods designs, incorporate more diverse stakeholder perspectives (e.g., farmers, tourism authorities, tourists from different markets), and develop robust indicators to link social media analytics with offline purchase data. Longitudinal research could further illuminate how sustained social media engagement influences long-term loyalty, spending patterns, and inclusive agribusiness development in culinary tourism destinations.

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