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THE UTILISATION OF DIGITAL FINANCE AND MARKETING AMONG FOOD TRUCK ENTREPRENEURS IN TERENGGANU

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Abstract: Food trucks have become popular among Malaysians, especially in Terengganu. This study investigated the strategies used by food truck owners in sustaining their businesses through the empowerment of effective management through digital financing and marketing. This study adopted a qualitative research design with exploratory, inductive research. Information was gathered through an in-depth interview using the snowball sampling technique, which involved five food truck business owners. The results show that the use of digital marketing (e.g., TikTok and Facebook) among food truck business owners to promote their business was lacking. Most entrepreneurs use basic digital financing tools (e.g., Microsoft Excel) to record their business transactions. This study provides new insight into how entrepreneurs use digital marketing and financing tools to maintain business sustainability, especially for food truck owners located in Terengganu. However, this study is limited to only food trucks in Terengganu and does not include any secondary data. Thus, future research might consist of food truck owners from other states and employ primary and secondary data sources for more reliable results.

Keywords: Digital finance, digital marketing, food truck, entrepreneurs.

Introduction

Malaysia has achieved rapid economic growth and restructuring since its independence in 1957. However, the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and the Economic Crisis in 2008 have halted this trajectory. Hence, the economic development of the country needs to be evaluated to determine what are the major causes of Malaysia's economic setback.

Entrepreneurial development incentives and programmes should not be taken carelessly and should be executed on a seasonal basis. Considering that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the development and stability of a country's economy, attention needs to be given to the sector. Realising the importance of entrepreneurship for national growth, "Dasar Keusahawanan Nasional" (DKN) or National Entrepreneurship Policy (NEP), was introduced to propel Malaysia to become a leading entrepreneurial nation by 2030. This policy will be the cornerstone for the formation of a holistic entrepreneurship development ecosystem, and it is hoped to be the catalyst for the transformation of an inclusive economic and entrepreneurial community in Malaysia. This policy is meant to drive Malaysia's ascent to become a unified, prosperous, and dignified nation through sustainable, equitable and inclusive development (Rani *et al*., 2020).

NEP 2030 has six thrusts to transform Malaysia's economy into one that is inclusive, sustainable, progressive, and driven by knowledge and innovation. One of them is Strengthening Entrepreneurial Capabilities and Performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (Strategic Thrust No. 5). To accomplish this policy objective, competitive entrepreneurs with adequate skills and capabilities are crucial. This is in line with one of DKN's objectives of creating a holistic and conducive entrepreneurship ecosystem to assist the inclusive, balanced and sustainable economic development agenda of the nation.

Hence, entrepreneurs must increase their knowledge in financial management and business strategic management skills to sustain and maintain their business operations. A strategy for strengthening the entrepreneurial knowledge of a particular country needs to be focused on communities that exert a significant impact on the national economy. This is in line with Hashim *et al*. (2020), who agreed that a lack of skills and knowledge regarding business management and financial aspects are the main obstacles faced by micro-entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship empowerment activities in Terengganu have dual benefits. Apart from elevating the economic status of the Terengganu community, it also helps foster various tourism activities. In Terengganu, the empowerment of small and medium-sized enterprises is considered highly important, especially for food truck businesses (FTB), as they have been acknowledged as one of the main drivers in the development of mobile food services. Food truck entrepreneurs are believed to have the potential ability to impart knowledge on digital financing and marketing (Lichy *et al*., 2022). This opportunity can be leveraged to show the uniqueness of various products based on local preferences, especially in introducing unique food to local and foreign tourists by intensively using digital marketing.

Recently, FTBs have become popular among Malaysians (Ab Wahab *et al*., 2017; Choi *et al*., 2020), including in the east coast region of Terengganu. This new concept of business started to grow by leaps and bounds, after the opening of tourism landmark the Terengganu Drawbridge, which had begun operations in September 2016. Since food trucks are categorised as Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), they do not require large start-up costs as the business does not need brick-and-mortar premises (Abdullah *et al*., 2022). This business also requires only a few people to handle it. FTB's require owners to effectively implement marketing techniques to attract customers.

In addition, the amount spent on necessities such as car oil, raw materials, and wages is not prohibitive. Since food trucks only started to gain momentum in this emerging economy, their owners should be imparted with knowledge on how to manage their finances well. Having such a solid financial foundation is imperative for the longevity and success of an FTB. It not only allows for efficient day-to-day operations but is also a determinant in a food truck's sustainability, profitability, and growth (Koay *et al*., 2023).

According to Mustafa Ali and Ebaidalla (2023), since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, most businesses have been forced to embrace new digital technologies, especially micro-enterprises that need to re-evaluate their traditional business models in the transition to digitalisation. FTBs have quickly embraced digital technologies to adapt to customer behaviour in order to assure their survival in the market. Moreover, these businesses can maintain their relevance by keeping up with the current trends, especially by embracing technological advancements (Sung *et al*., 2022).

Hence, educational programmes on managing finance and enhancing digital marketing should be done to sustain the growth and competitiveness of the FTB. Entrepreneurs also need to be equipped with sufficient knowledge and information to ensure their businesses are stable and sustainable (Saadat *et al*., 2021; Chen & Dai, 2022; Satjaharuthai & Lakkhongkha, 2023).

Since the popularity of FTB is increasing (Asmoro *et al*., 2019), this study was carried out to investigate the strategies used by food truck owners in sustaining their businesses through the empowerment of effective financial management and digital marketing. Even though many studies have explained the importance of financial planning and digital marketing for an organisation, there is scant discussion on how FTBs could utilise the advancement of technology for their business strategies.

This study focused on a rural area in Terengganu, Malaysia. It is anticipated that the findings from this study will fill the gap in the body of knowledge and at the same time, benefit entrepreneurs. In addition, this study could develop strategies that leverage technology to enhance branding, customer engagement, service quality, sustainability, and overall business performance in the increasingly digitised landscape of the food industry.

This study is crucial in highlighting the disparity in digital marketing adoption among small businesses and underlines the significance of improving digital marketing literacy for food truck entrepreneurs to properly use digital platforms. Additionally, this study emphasises the need for financial literacy in enhancing business performance through digital financial strategies, particularly in difficult economic circumstances. FTBs can leverage digital financial solutions, such as mobile payment systems and online banking platforms, to streamline their financial transactions, access funding opportunities, and manage their resources more efficiently.

This study offers valuable theoretical insights into the underlying mechanisms and frameworks that drive the adoption and implementation of digital strategies in business operations. Thus, food truck entrepreneurs can gain a deeper understanding of how these concepts can be applied to enhance their business practices and achieve sustainable growth.

Utilisation of Digital Finance and Marketing among Food Truck Entrepreneurs

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a food truck is a large, wheeled vehicle equipped also with cooking facilities to prepare and sell food. It is also described as a food supplier that operates out of mobile vehicles (Hernández-López, 2011). This is also in line with the definition by IBISWorld (2015) that this type of business "comprises establishments primarily engaged in preparing and serving meals from a mobile truck; and the food is normally prepared, stored, and cooked on the truck". Linnekin *et al*. (2011) further stated that these trucks also serve and modify food according to the preferences of their customers.

Recently, food trucks have been given various names among consumers, such as mobile food vendors, food carts, gourmet food trucks, catering trucks and rolling or roving restaurants (Tester et al., 2010; Mulmi, 2015). This business also may or may not use the same location each day to operate its business, and interestingly, in terms of hospitality specialties, it offers gourmet cuisine and a variety of ethnic menus.

In the past 10 years, the food industry has experienced consistent growth and rapid changes in people's lifestyles and eating patterns. This evidenced from the mushrooming of FTB all over the world at locations such as in study places, street corners, in front of other premises, and during special events (Vanschaik Faw & Tuttle, 2014).

Malaysia also experienced the same phenomenon. The food truck phenomenon in Malaysia started in 2014 (Mokhtar *et al*., 2018). Datuk Mohamad Zaini Md Taha, the chairman of the Malaysian Food Truck Association (MAFTA), stated that there were about 820 registered FTBs and over 1,000 licenses have been issued for food trucks in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya alone (New Straits Times, 2019). The significance and escalating growth of the FTB have captivated the interest of scholars, resulting in numerous investigations.

Among the topics examined are the performance efficiency of the FTB (Alfiero *et al*., 2017), technology influence on food truck innovation (Lichy *et al*., 2022), management issues of the FTB (Mulmi, 2015; Wahab *et al*., 2017), and the profile of food truck consumers (Valente *et al*., 2020). Most of these studies focused on understanding the operation of FTBs (Ramly *et al*., 2020) and there have been limited studies on determinants that could improve their business operations.

Moreover, there has been little study into how digital marketing relates to FTB operations (Zakaria & Kamaludin, 2022) and there is no study investigating how digital finance could help food truck owners. However, Yoon and Chung (2018), Shin *et al*. (2019), and Ramly *et al*. (2020) have investigated the food truck visit intention among customers and the factors that lead to the intention.

As the number of FTBs continues to increase rapidly (Ramly *et al*., 2020), the competition among food truck owners with other food and beverage restaurants, fast-food restaurants, and other online food services has become intense. This indicates FTB as small entrepreneurs, are facing various struggles in sustaining their business. Literature and statistics also show that four out of 10 entrepreneurs are successful, while the rest have failed after a certain time (Bank of Canada, 2015; Weking *et al*., 2019). In Malaysia, Lim and Teoh (2021) stated that most Malaysian entrepreneurs survive only the first five years of their establishments.

In addressing this issue, the use of technology is such a big help in creating sustainable social businesses and fostering innovation is paramount to ensure business continuity and growth (Fiorentino *et al*., 2020). Mole *et al*. (2004) and Nguyen *et al*. (2015) stated that before the COVID-19 pandemic, the level of technology used among small businesses was low, and the failure rate was high. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs have realised the full potential of technology adoption in daily operations.

Hence, throughout this study, it is suggested that the extensive use of technology is vital to the achievements and success of businesses (Chatterjee *et al*., 2021) in embracing digital finance together with digital marketing (Zakaria & Kamaludin, 2022).

Technology and digital marketing are interrelated. The theory employed for this study is the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Lockett & Thompson, 2001). RBV focuses on how companies use their unique resources and competencies to obtain a competitive edge. In terms of digital finance and marketing, food truck entrepreneurs may use these tools to improve operational efficiency, customer reach, and brand visibility, giving them a competitive advantage. Leveraging technology is crucial for the success of digital marketing strategies as it is used for connecting and communicating with local communities (Nikolopoulos & Dana, 2017; Sonenshein *et al*., 2017; Lichy *et al*., 2022).

Digital marketing enables sellers and customers to exchange various information (Wessel, 2012). For instance, the broad use of smartphones and other electronic devices, social media platforms and GPS applications helps food truck entrepreneurs to advertise and share their business locations and offerings (Wessel *et al*., 2016).

Several studies show how well thought out social media usage influences FTB performance (e.g., Ishak *et al*., 2018; Lichy *et al*., 2022). Anenberg & Kung (2015) stated that through the broad use of smartphones and social media, the food truck industry has become more successful as it helps in providing real-time location operating, expanding reach and visibility, and increasing access to a wide range of food.

These technologies have also facilitated the use of social media as a marketing tool (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to promote business and further enhance their presence and success in the market (Anenberg & Kung, 2015; Zakaria & Kamaludin, 2022). For instance, Twitter (now called X) is one of the most useful and least costly mass-marketing tools to inform the current location of food truck operating hours and check whether their picked locations overlap with the other entrepreneurs (Wessel, 2012). It also provides vendors with the latest updated menu, whether they are sold out or out of service (Ishak *et al*., 2018).

This indicates that social media helps both business enterprises and local communities to communicate and interact effectively (Shabbir *et al*., 2016; Nikolopoulos & Dana, 2017; Sonenshein *et al*., 2017).

Consequently, the general idea posited here is that customers are unclear regarding the food trucks' locations due to their mobility and other issues such as traffic congestion, parking troubles, or mechanical failure. Hence, the emergence of wireless digital technology helps entrepreneurs promote their locations. This will reduce the consumer's uncertainty about a food truck's location, thereby increasing the demand for food trucks (Anenburg & Kung, 2015).

According to Taft *et al*. (2013), financial knowledge refers to the skills and confidence possessed to make better decisions in the management of personal or business finances. Digital finance refers to the use of technology (e.g., e-commerce transactions, accounting systems, mobile payments, online borrowing) (Olatunji, 2013; Yang *et al*., 2023) to improve financial performance more effectively. Both financial knowledge and digital finance are interconnected as they help entrepreneurs in their financial management and in making informed decisions to improve performance. Despite the positive outlook of SMEs, it has been discovered that several of these enterprises close due to poor management arising from weak and undependable accounting structures and financial information (Saifiriyu & Njogo, 2012).

In overcoming this issue, the World Bank in 2022 suggested that digital finance can close the finance gap for small businesses by enabling various new digital products and process automation. This includes the digitisation of business processes, especially in managing accounting and business transactions of the company (e.g., collecting and storing data within the appropriate accounting systems). The automation and streamlined workflows enable small businesses, like food trucks, to focus on strategic alternatives in sustaining growth rather than being bothered by time-consuming and manual financial tasks.

According to a study by Schubert and Leimstoll (2007), organisations extensively use technology in their business, mostly for financing and accounting purposes. Previous studies also accounted for the importance of accounting systems in business transactions (Belfo & Trigo, 2013; Saad, 2023), but there has been little focus on small businesses and how accounting system might influence firm performance (e.g., Olatunji, 2013; Umeji & Obi, 2014; Gyamera *et al*., 2023). Olatunji (2013) explained that accounting tools help enhance business performance by providing proper means to track daily spending, manage financial transactions, and generate reliable financial reports and record daily sales. In other words, it contributes to overall firm performance by offering efficiency, accuracy, and visibility towards the financial processes.

This is consistent with the study by Gyamera *et al*. (2023) that found significant positive effects accounting systems have on small businesses, which focus on the value of employing accounting services for enhancing financial performance. They further argued that accounting services in small businesses are crucial in highlighting the role of modern techniques of financial statements and accounting software.

However, most small businesses may not have maintained any records except for tax purposes. Nonetheless, it should be noted that accounting is a means for management support rather than an end itself (Wood, 1979; Luper & Kwanum, 2012; Sun & Wong, 2024). To reiterate, there is almost no evidence referring to digital finance, particularly in small businesses, except in the study from Awinja & Fatoki (2021).

In addition, it is crucial that each system must be designed to fit the nature of the individual enterprise, the volume of transactions of various types, and the number and the capacities of the personnel. Hence, it is important to provide easy and appropriate accounting tools using existing technological advancement so that small businesses and food trucks can adequately keep all their transaction records.

Based on the previous arguments and discussions, it can be concluded that incorporating such digital finance into the FTB has the potential to augment operational efficiency, achieve customer satisfaction, and improve control over fiscal facets.

Materials and Method

This study encompasses the food truck industry in Kuala Terengganu, Kuala Nerus, and Gong Badak in Terengganu. A qualitative methodology was adopted, with focus on phenomenological research design. Since the researcher requires more information and data from the entrepreneurs, an exploratory, inductive research approach was considered the most suitable. According to Creswell and Clark (2017) and Fan *et al*. (2022), in qualitative research, the inductive approach is often used to provide a detailed explanation of what will be or was found throughout the study.

In this research, the selected respondents must meet certain criteria before being accepted as respondents. They must be food or beverage business owners who possess social media accounts for their businesses. The phenomenon is studied through the experience and description obtained from the participants of this research based on the level of technology used in embracing digital marketing to promote their business.

The researcher attempts to understand their experiences in using social media, the way they are currently using it, and any changes to the business once they use it. The researcher also attempts to gain an understanding of how well they use digital finance; and whether they have used any accounting tools for their business transactions.

In-depth interviews with five food or beverage truck business entrepreneurs were conducted through the snowballing sampling method. Snowball sampling is employed in qualitative research to target people who are difficult to access (Sadler *et al*., 2010; Dayan & Jameel, 2024) through traditional sample techniques, thus enhancing the diversity and comprehensiveness of the data. We started with two interviewees, and the interviewees suggested another interviewee to get more feedback. At the end of the session, we gathered five interviewees for this study until we achieved data saturation (there is no further feedback or new point on this subject matter).

Since this study is considered a phenomenological study, Creswell and Clark (2017) proposed that a sample size range of at least three to 25 informants is needed. Hence, five informants involved in this study were considered reasonable. Additionally, the chosen five informants were involved in an FTB empowerment programme and are active on social media as well as employed digital finance in their business. To collect the intended information, researchers collected the data through the programme called "*Bengkel Pengukuhan Kewangan dan Publisiti Digital 2023*" in Kuala Terengganu. Two semi-structured questions were posed to the FTB owners as per below:

1. How do digital marketing tools affect their business operations?
2. What tools do they use to record their business transactions, and how important are these tools to their business?

All responses from the respondents were analysed qualitatively by presenting the data in a descriptive format before conducting the thematic analysis to detect, examine and document recurring patterns in qualitative data, making it particularly well-suited for studies that employ snowball sampling (Kibriya & Koussr, 2021).

Results and Discussion

Five food truck entrepreneurs in Kuala Terengganu District, Terengganu, were chosen as the informants. The authors explored how digital social media platforms affected FTB owners' ability to maintain the continuity of their businesses. The authors also discovered that active social media and internet services usage among FTB owners in Terengganu are only Facebook and Tik Tok; and did not have YouTube and Instagram accounts.

Accordingly, the name of the Facebook webpage for this community is Terengganu Food Truck Club (TFC), and as for TikTok is known as Food Truck Drawbridge. The summary of social media usage is as per Table 1 below.

Table 1: Social media or internet use variable summary

Variables	Total
Number of Facebook page followers	8,900
Number of "Likes" of Facebook page	8,200
Number of TikTok Followers	46,100
Number of "Likes" of TikTok	592,400

Surprisingly, the result shows that digital marketing tools are not extensively used by them since they do not have a significant impact on business performance. This result contradicts the findings of other studies (e.g., Wallsten & Rhyan, 2014; Ishak *et al.*, 2018: Hokmabadi, 2024), which stated that social media such as Facebook pages and websites are more likely to result in business longevity.

Several studies emphasise the potential advantages of utilising digital marketing technologies to improve brand visibility, expand reach to new client categories, and engage with target audiences. A few opponents highlight the difficulties of using these technologies, such as their subpar performance and the high rate of business failure attributed to their limited adoption (Njelita *et al.*, 2023).

Additionally, although digital marketing is recognised as crucial, certain businesses, especially SMEs, may be slower in embracing these tools, which might potentially affect their competitiveness and growth (Cutinha & Mokshagundam, 2022).

Therefore, despite digital marketing technologies having the potential to greatly improve business performance, there are still persistent problems in terms of adopting these tools, integrating them into business plans, and optimising their impact.

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of utilising digital marketing, overcoming obstacles to its adoption, and customising tactics to effectively harness these technologies are essential for companies aiming to take benefit from the advantages of digital marketing in today's fiercely competitive environment.

Besides being asked about the types of social media involved in the business, food truck owners provide their views on how these marketing tools affect their business operations. Table 2 shows excerpts of the interview feedback from the food truck owners.

Table 2: Feedback from food truck owners on digital marketing

Informants	**Feedback**
Informant 1	There is no effort from the person in charge specifically to conduct digital promotion. We have social media, but we do not make use of it.
Informant 2	Digital marketing is needed and important for this new era but most of the posts about our business have low viewers and likes. Maybe we need some improvement about it such as creating a powerful hashtag and proper teaser video for Food truck Terengganu.
Informant 3	The platform that could impact the business the most for now is TikTok and I usually use that to promote new menus, events, and daily views at Food Truck Drawbridge. This helps me engage with the customer and become a marketing tool.
Informant 4	Since using social media such as Facebook and TikTok to promote business, my business has become more popular.
Informant 5	In the era of viral, the use of social media is crucial for marketing purposes.

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that although digital marketing can be beneficial for most businesses, it might be different from the nature of the food truck industry. Since small businesses like food trucks always lack various resources, this might lead them to prioritise other strategic marketing tools that are less costly rather than digital marketing (e.g., word-of-mouth advertisement).

Based on the interview with informants, they use digital platforms for marketing purposes, but the engagement is not impactful due to lack of effort from the person in charge and the wrong strategy used for marketing.

However, two informants agreed that social media makes their business popular and that it is easy to get recognition (going viral) using such platforms.? Businesses should employ digital marketing technologies first and foremost, they empower firms to access a wider target audience and directly interact with consumers.

Through the utilisation of digital marketing, firms can enhance brand recognition, engage with customers in real time, and minimise expenses related to conventional marketing techniques (Andiana *et al*., 2021). In addition, digital marketing platforms enable businesses to enhance their brand, boost sales, and attain long-term success (Sopanah *et al*., 2023).

Thus, it shows that the use of digital marketing is necessary but should be managed efficiently with an effective strategy. By adopting digital marketing techniques, businesses may adjust to the changing digital landscape, successfully engage with their desired audience, and achieve sustainable growth in today's competitive business environment.

The authors also explored how digital finance, specifically financial records, would enhance their business performance in turn help in business sustainability. Table 3 shows the excerpts of the explanations from the food truck owners on what tools they use to record their business transactions and how important it is to their business:

Table 3: Feedback from food truck owners on digital finance

Informants	Feedback
Informant 1	We do have digital financial records (Microsoft Excel) for our business but it is just the record for debit and credit. We do not have Microsoft Excel that could evaluate our records to produce financial statements.
Informant 2	In the digital era, we need to know how to utilise digital finance so that it can be used for Food truck businesses since these businesses have ups and downs. A good financial record could analyse the business downtime, and we can manage it to do any action in the future. But we do not know how to start using it.
Informant 3	I had used formatted Microsoft Excel before, but it is not compatible with my business. End up just using it to record debit and credit.
Informant 4	Digital financial records are crucial for now since most customers request to pay using online transfer or QR code.
Informant 5	Using Microsoft Excel specifically for the Food Truck business makes it easier to calculate the profit and plan for the next business agenda.

The informants reveal that most food truck entrepreneurs do record transactions on basic Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Additionally, in the digital era, most customers request to pay by online or QR code. They agreed that it is important to have a suitable and well-designed accounting system to track the expenses, losses and revenues of their business. Digital financial records allow them to quickly record business revenue and easily prepare annual financial statements.

Furthermore, digital records could help them examine their business downtime and plan business strategies. The significant role of accounting systems through digital platforms is consistent with the findings of Olatunji (2013) and Lu *et al*. (2022), that the adoption of sound accounting systems helps to enhance the performance of SMEs.

Digital finance enhances financial inclusion and aids SMEs by broadening their reach via online platforms for payments, savings, and credit facilities.

Additionally, based on Chen (2024), this comprehensive approach helps mitigate financial limitations, fulfil various financial requirements, and promote the development of green technologies. Thus, in the food truck business, effectively utilising digital finance tools could optimise financial management, access funding, and streamline financial transactions.

This is supported by Yang (2024), that digital financial inclusion provides more adaptable and practical financing options for unique groups, including SMEs. In addition, digital finance may lessen funding constraints for SMEs by lowering information asymmetry, improving lending cycles, and increasing financial flexibility (Jiang & Ruan, 2023).

Hence, by leveraging digital finance, businesses may effectively market their products on these platforms, thereby fostering the growth of their business. This demonstrates the crucial importance of the digital finance sector in corporate management operations as it facilitates data entry and transactions.

Conclusions

Having examined how FTBs in Terengganu embrace technology to support their daily operation, it is concluded that the digital platforms are beneficial for digital finance, meanwhile, it does not have a significant influence on digital marketing. From the results obtained, most of the food truck owners agreed that having digital finance through well-designed accounting tools could help in tracking business losses.

This is in line with the study from Olatunji (2013), but the study focuses generally on small businesses, not food truck businesses. Digital finance can assist entrepreneurs in finding out why their business is having trouble or which expenses should be controlled. Most food truck entrepreneurs also possess the basic knowledge to record their business transactions by using basic accounting tools such as Microsoft Excel.

However, they are only knowledgeable about using it to record debit and credit and do not know how to use it for other financial records. Hence, it is suggested that responsible authorities provide more training, especially for start-up businesses.

Most businesses, food truck owners, possess social media but are not utilising it effectively to boost their business. This contradicts the findings byIshak (2018) and Lichy *et al*. (2022), which highlighted that food truck entrepreneurs can leverage social media to establish a viable social business. Thus, the government might need to provide various alternatives and create awareness of how digital marketing can help small businesses create awareness among business owners in developing their marketing strategy and fully utilise social media as a marketing tool. It is anticipated that the findings will close the information gap and possibly aid future researchers in their investigation of this growing industry.

The integration of digital finance and marketing within the realm of FTB is crucial in fostering their business expansion and long-term viability. Employing digital tools and techniques can improve market visibility, customer interaction, and financial results for food truck enterprises. Research by Johan *et al.* (2022) highlights the effectiveness of social media as a branding tool for food truck businesses, aiding in creating customer value and competitiveness in local markets.

Additionally, Huang and Azman (2023) demonstrate the positive impact of digital inclusive finance on operating income for agricultural enterprises, suggesting its potential benefits for financial performance among food truck entrepreneurs. The implementation of digital finance and marketing strategies by food truck entrepreneurs not only improves the financial performance and market reach of their businesses but also has wider implications for financial inclusion (Su *et al.*, 2021; Tian *et al.*, 2022), health promotion, environmental sustainability (Olan *et al.*, 2022; Gao *et al.*, 2022), and technological innovation (Wen *et al.*, 2022; Wu *et al.*, 2022).

By properly utilising digital tools, stakeholders can establish a business climate for food truck entrepreneurs and the larger community that is more inclusive and sustainable and promotes better health.

This study has some limitations; the research concentrates on food trucks in Terengganu and does not incorporate any secondary data. Hence, future research could include food truck owners from other states, employing a combination of primary and secondary data sources to yield more accurate outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial, or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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