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Digital Marketing Strategies and Social Media Engagement and Purchase Intentions for Private Memorial Lots Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement on the purchase intentions of young adults toward private memorial lots in Bukidnon, Philippines, employing a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from 440 young adults residing in Malaybalay City and Valencia City through stratified random sampling using a validated researcher-made questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.929$ for Digital Marketing Strategies and $\alpha = 0.973$ for Social Media Engagement). Digital marketing strategies were measured through content strategy, engagement strategy, and advertising strategy, while social media engagement was assessed through consumption, contribution, and creation. Purchase intention served as the dependent variable. Results revealed that digital marketing strategies were perceived as effective ($M = 3.06$), while respondents exhibited a moderate level of social media engagement ($M = 2.65$). Purchase intention toward private memorial lots was generally low despite respondents expressing favorable perceptions toward digital marketing activities ($M = 3.03$). Pearson correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between digital marketing strategies and purchase intention ($r = .595, p < .001$) and between social media engagement and purchase intention ($r = .497, p < .001$). Multiple regression analysis further identified engagement strategy ($\beta = .344$), advertising strategy ($\beta = .176$), and social media creation ($\beta = .245$) as significant predictors explaining 40.1% of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = .401$). The findings demonstrate that effective digital marketing and meaningful online engagement significantly influence young adults' purchase intentions toward private memorial lots, highlighting the importance of interactive communication and consumer-generated content in promoting memorial planning.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the area of purchase intention has gained great importance in the study of consumer behavior (Naseem & Yaprak, 2023) because of fast emergence of digital technologies and shifts in buying patterns. Definition of purchase intention is the willingness or probability of a consumer to make a purchase decision after assessing all information received by the buyer. Different factors that influence purchase intention includes consumer perception, trust level of customer, social influence and communication (Koay *et al.*, 2023). However, understanding the factors influencing purchase intention is important for the firms willing to make their marketing communications effective as well as develop good customer relationships.

Globally, memorial lot providers face challenges in encouraging advance planning because many consumers delay decisions on funeral and end-of-life products due to emotional sensitivity, cultural beliefs, and attitudes towards death. people tend to postpone making decisions concerning funeral products (Monkge & Makgosa, 2021). Similar circumstances exist in Northern Mindanao, specifically in Bukidnon, where the development of memorial parks does not guarantee an increase in intentions to buy from the market among the younger generations (Monkge & Makgosa, 2021).

In response to the development of consumer behavior

patterns, businesses are now making more use of digital technologies for connecting to their target markets. More conveniently than before, businesses have been using digital means to communicate faster and better than traditional means (Rosario & Dias, 2023; Huang *et al.*, 2024). Various strategies like digital advertising, content marketing, or activities aimed at promoting consumer interaction should be implemented in order to achieve higher visibility, build trust, and boost buying intention. For example, enterprises can make use of social media networks in order to stay in touch with their target audience.

Out of all digital consumers, young people can be considered one of the most active market segments that usually turn to social media platforms for information as well as recommendation before making the necessary decisions. According to Osman and Shamsuddin (2024), the majority of young generations depend upon social networks in their decision-making process. Huang *et al.* (2024) provide evidence that successful purchase intention is facilitated by engaging with consumers through interactive digital content. However, even though the young generations are active participants in the world of digital marketing, it does not mean that they are willing to get themselves ready to pay for death-related services as indicated by the fact that there are a considerable amount of offers available.

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The previous studies emphasized that, in general, it is possible to influence the behavior of consumer positively when they are exposed to the relevant digital strategies regarding the services they use (Wuisan & Handra, 2023; Ong *et al.*, 2023). The findings of the studies indicated that social media communication usually helps the consumers to know the services and products through previous knowledge, trust, familiarity, and emotional involvement (Gutierrez *et al.*, 2023; Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2023). Despite all aforementioned advantages of digital strategies that can be applied, this industry has difficulties in being promoted as the consumers face issues related to the emotions in their purchases.

Although it was explained why promoting the services is extremely difficult. These services need to be associated with empathy, trust, and emotional reassurance from the side of the provider (Lee & Kim, 2023). Also, Patel and Sharma (2023) commented that customers do not always feel comfortable and ready to discuss the issues related to death that is why they cannot buy the necessary units. Considering these circumstances, there is a need to investigate how digital marketing strategies and social media engagement influence purchase intention of young adults towards private memorial lots. Although previous studies have established the positive effects of digital marketing and social media engagement on consumer purchase intention, limited research has examined these relationships within the private memorial lot industry, particularly among young adults in Bukidnon, Philippines. Understanding these relationships may provide valuable insights for private memorial lot providers in developing more effective, empathetic, and culturally appropriate marketing approaches that encourage consumer willingness and future purchasing consideration. Furthermore, the findings of this study may contribute to the growing body of knowledge on consumer purchase intention in emotionally sensitive industries and provide guidance for future digital marketing practices in the memorial care sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), and Customer Engagement Theory developed by Brodie *et al.* (2011). Together, these theories explain how digital marketing strategies and social media engagement contribute to the purchase intentions of young adults toward private memorial lots.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) serves as the primary theoretical foundation of this research, as it explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence an individual's behavioral intention. According to Ajzen (1991), intention is the most immediate antecedent of behavior and is

shaped by an individual's evaluation of the behavior, perceived social expectations, and perceived control over performing the behavior. In this study, attitude refers to young adults' favorable or unfavorable evaluation of purchasing private memorial lots after exposure to digital marketing messages. Subjective norms refer to the influence of peers, family, online communities, reviews, and other social influences on their purchasing decisions. Perceived behavioral control refers to their perceived capability to purchase a memorial lot, which may be influenced by access to information, financial capacity, and available purchasing options. Thus, TPB provides a psychological basis for understanding how young adults form purchase intentions toward private memorial lots.

To explain the role of digital technology, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) serves as a theoretical foundation for understanding how individuals accept and use technological systems. TAM emphasizes two major components, namely, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In this study, TAM explains how young adults perceive and use digital platforms in accessing information about private memorial lots. Digital marketing strategies delivered through social media, online advertisements, and other digital platforms may be more effective when young adults perceive these technologies as useful and easy to use. Therefore, TAM provides a technological perspective on how young adults receive, evaluate, and respond to digital marketing messages related to private memorial lots.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) provides a unifying perspective on how external stimuli influence internal psychological processes and behavioral responses. In this study, digital marketing strategies and social media engagement serve as external stimuli that expose young adults to informative, interactive, promotional, and emotionally relevant content. These stimuli may influence internal cognitive and affective processes, including attitudes, perceptions, trust, and emotional responses, which may subsequently lead to purchase intentions. Thus, the S-O-R framework explains how digital exposure and online engagement can transform external marketing stimuli into internal consumer responses and, ultimately, purchase intentions toward private memorial lots.

The study is further grounded in Customer Engagement Theory developed by Brodie *et al.* (2011), which explains how consumers develop cognitive, emotional, and behavioral relationships with brands through interaction and continuous engagement. This theory is particularly relevant to the study because young adults interact with digital marketing content through social media activities such as viewing, reacting, commenting, sharing, and creating content. Such engagement may increase familiarity, trust, and emotional connection with private memorial lot providers. In this context, social media engagement represents an important process through

which young adults interact with memorial-related content and develop perceptions that may influence their purchase intentions.

Integrating TPB, TAM, S-O-R, and Customer Engagement Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how digital marketing strategies and social media engagement influence the purchase intentions of young adults toward private memorial lots. TPB explains the psychological and social determinants of purchase intention, while TAM explains the acceptance and use of digital technologies through perceived usefulness and ease of use. The S-O-R framework explains how digital marketing and social media engagement serve as external stimuli that influence consumers' internal cognitive and emotional processes and lead to behavioral intentions. Meanwhile, Customer Engagement Theory explains how continuous interaction with digital content strengthens consumer familiarity, trust, and emotional connection. Together, these theories establish the theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between digital marketing strategies, social media engagement, and purchase intentions among young adults toward private memorial lots.

Digital Marketing Strategies

Digital Marketing strategies are now a must for contemporary businesses, given the need for businesses to use digital channels to connect with consumers and build a strong market presence. Social Media, websites, online advertising, and digital tools are widely used for creating a brand identity, establishing good relations with consumers, and influencing their buying behavior. As pointed out by Rosario and Dias (2023), digital marketing strategies empower organizations to communicate directly with consumers through social media networks by providing them personalized marketing which can increase consumer engagement.

Furthermore, evidence shows that digital marketing strategies facilitate consumer engagement and purchase intention. The work of Huang *et al.* (2024) shows that the elements of social media marketing that focus on interaction and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) provide positive communication with consumers and enhance their engagement, which leads to a positive outcome, such as purchase intention. Wuisan and Handra (2023) also supported the idea that the use of online advertising has a direct impact on the buying intention of consumer awareness through digital communication. The significance of content adequacy and target audience applicability in determining the effectiveness of digital marketing has been established. Tafesse and Wood (2023) pointed out that useful and audience-oriented information generates online interaction since customers are inclined to engage with the information they find useful, relevant, and appealing emotionally. Santos *et al.* (2024) emphasized that online engagement enables organizations to build trust and foster lifelong relationships with their clients through interaction and

instant responses. Nonetheless, previous studies have shown that the efficiency of digital marketing techniques differs depending on the type of goods and/or services promoted.

Rukmana *et al.* (2023) pointed out that although the implementation of digital marketing tools facilitates customer interaction and online engagement in general, its effect on consumers' purchasing intentions may vary across sectors and contexts. For instance, in some cases, emotional sensitivity and focuses on future consumption requires an appropriate and careful approach to communication, while in other industries advertisements for simple commercial goods do not need special attitude towards consumers. Furthermore, it demonstrates that while digital marketing techniques are used in many sectors, only few studies have investigated the role of digital marketing in the emotionally sensitive sector of memorial care services, which is an unexamined field of research, since digital marketing methods were used mostly in studies devoted to the retail sector, tourism, and online-based sales industry.

In the Philippines, social media and digital marketing are of great importance for consumers' behavior and purchasing process. The results of the study conducted by Cayaban *et al.* (2023) indicated that customers in the Philippines commonly use social media for product searching, service comparison, and evaluating recommendations given online. Their research showed that online interaction and digital visibility impact consumer trust and purchase behavior greatly, particularly among young consumers who are constantly exposed to digital settings. In line with this, Santos and colleagues (2024) pointed out that Filipino consumers are highly influenced by the use of interactive online communications and user-generated content, increasing their desire to purchase or engage with their desired brands.

Content Strategy

Content strategy is about planning, creating, and delivering online content to attract, inform, and engage consumers through social media and online platforms. Successful content strategy focuses on providing relevant, meaningful and emotionally driven messages that result in consumer interaction and improved relationship between brand and consumers.

On the other hand, according to Tafesse and Wood (2023), content features like quality, presentation, frequency of posting and alignment between interests of audience and organizer of such content become important factors that increase effectiveness of social media interaction. In similar manner, Wardani *et al.* (2024) discovered in their analyses that persuasive and simple informative messages stimulate consumer reaction to online posts by combining elements of informative content and emotional appeal.

Furthermore, Rosário and Dias (2023) stated that both user-generated and company-generated content

impacts consumer perceptions and purchase behavior of consumers. User-generated content, reviews and experience sharing are considered to be more valuable than traditional advertising, thus helping build relationships with consumers through trustful approach. The general tone of literature suggests that content strategies that are effective are those that emphasize clarity, emotional attraction, socio-cultural relevance, and consumer-based communication among others. However, there are few research works that examine how these content strategies will influence the perceptions and purchase decisions of the youth in relation to acquiring private memorial lots in the context of the Philippines.

Overall, there literature suggested that effective content strategies combine clarity, emotional appeal, social relevance, and consumer-centered communication. However, limited studies have examined how these strategies influence young adults' perceptions and purchase intentions toward private memorial lots, particularly within the Philippine context.

Engagement Strategy

Engagement strategy refers to the different interactive mechanisms that are used by organizations to communicate, engage, and build relationships among individuals through automated platforms. Through these mechanisms, individuals are encouraged to engage with the content via various means, including commenting on, reacting to, sharing, and partaking in discussions.

According to Nida and Prianthara (2022), customer engagement is the sophisticated cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with a brand. Nida and Prianthara's study indicated that engagement is more than just passively viewing the content but rather involves active engagement with the content in such a way that it strengthens the relationship between the consumer and the brand. Eslami *et al.* (2022) further found that customer engagement can be assessed through customer behaviors that are observable on their online platforms such as liking, sharing, commenting, and reacting. They indicated that credibility, popularity, and framing of the message drive consumer engagement behavior on social media.

Similarly, Kulikovskaja *et al.* (2023) supported Eslami *et al.*'s (2022) reasoning that infotainment and relational content also help to drive consumer engagement. Infotainment and relational forms of content are engaging due to their ability to satisfy the consumers' desire to obtain entertainment, information, and the need to socialize with others. Interactive and emotion provoking content engages the users to actively engage in online discussions and forums. Gross and Von Wangenheim (2022) reiterated that consumers will engage with sponsored content as long as they find it enjoyable and relatable to them emotionally. It indicates that the degree of hedonic utility offered by a given content and its emotional appeal will play a big role in determining engagement on the content. In emotionally sensitive areas, such as memorial

services, engagement strategies are very important since consumers need reassurance, empathy, and security before they can make decisions that involve emotional commitments. Engaging communication and prompt responses aid in reducing the fear and discomfort of consumers in talking about the range of memorial services. Despite the extensive literature on engagement strategies, there has been limited attention given to the application of engagement strategies in the acquisition of sensitive products, such as private memorial lots.

Advertising Strategy

The concept of advertising strategies is centered around the planned use of web advertisements and promotional approaches. It arises everywhere when we are talking about digital marketing techniques. Digital advertising strategies always include social media ads, sponsored messages, influencer marketing, and targeted internet campaigns that take into account all consumer habits (Rosário & Dias, 2023). According to Wuisan and Handra (2023), the influence of digital advertising on the customer's purchase intentions is evident. This is because the internet allows more visibility for products and services. It provides more familiarity for consumers with goods and services. We see that strategic advertisement has the capability to reach out to specific groups of people according to their characteristics, tastes, and internet habits.

Keke (2022) mentioned that efficient digital advertising should involve ongoing dialogue and communication between businesses and customers. Social media ads help to generate not only visibility but also online activity and sharing, which can strengthen the entire marketing process. Chiu and Ho (2023) said that advertisements based on the influencer's personality have a beneficial influence on purchase intentions of Generation Z customers. Emotional connection and relatability with the influencer increase the power of digital advertising. Emotional attractions appeal to the consumers' attention. Lopes and Casais (2022) highlighted that social media advertising allows consumers to make the right choice regarding products. It ensures transparency through providing relevant information. Ong *et al.* (2022) found out that interactive and attractive ads increase engagement and purchase intention, especially young people. In the context of memorial lot services, advertising strategies should be emotionally sensitive to potential clients. For instance, aggressive advertisements can make clients feel discomfort, and when we use more informative methods it helps to create trust. Young people are very much exposed to digital advertisements since they are super active on social networks.

Overall, this literature supported the importance of strategic, emotionally appealing, and consumer-centered advertising in influencing consumer behavior. However, limited studies have specifically explored how advertising strategies affect young adults' purchase intentions toward private memorial lots, particularly within the Philippine

setting.

Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction, participation, and involvement of users with digital content across social networking platforms. Engagement may occur through activities such as viewing posts, reacting, commenting, sharing, and creating user-generated content. In digital marketing environments, social media engagement is considered an important indicator of consumer interest and online behavioral response (Eslami *et al.*, 2022). According to Osman and Shamsuddin (2024), young adults heavily relied on social media as a source of information, recommendations, and peer validation when making purchasing decisions. Amini (2025) explained that social media platforms influence various stages of the consumer decision-making process, including information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchasing decisions. Consumers increasingly depend on digital platforms to compare products, gather information, and validate purchasing choices before making financial decisions. Similarly, Lestari and Nurhasanah (2025) found that social media engagement positively affects purchase intention through increased brand awareness and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Moreover, Gutierrez *et al.* (2023) emphasized that active consumer-brand interactions strengthen familiarity, trust, and emotional attachment toward products and services. According to Ebrahimi *et al.* (2023), consumers that regularly engage with online material tend to have more positive perceptions of brands and also have high levels of intent to purchase from those brands. This is due to the fact that interactions through social media provide consumers with many ways to evaluate products like comparing reviews, learning from others as they interact online, and discussing issues related to purchasing. While it is clear that respondents show high levels of engagement, this may not lead to actual purchase behavior.

The findings of Zahra and Roosdhani (2024) also showed that the purchasing decisions of consumers are influenced not only by their level of engagement but also by their feelings of trust, relevance, and connection to the topic. In the case of memorial goods and services, levels of engagement in social media can prove to be promising for the alleviation of any hesitance associated with their purchase. The exposure, along with interaction with peers through social networks can help make consumers feel more familiar and comfortable with discussing memorial planning and family preparedness. However, it should be noted that few studies have looked at the effect of social media engagement on young adults' purchase intentions towards private memorial lots in the Philippine context specifically. The influence of social media usage among Filipino consumers cannot be denied, as they are some of the most engaged users of social media around the globe. This means that online engagement activities,

including reacting, commenting, and sharing, have a significant impact on the way consumers think about and trust products and services. These results implied that social media engagement could also influence the way young adults feel about memorial services and the way they may make purchasing decisions in the future.

Social Media Consumption

Social media consumption is characterized as the passive consumption of online material by users through activities such as reading posts, watching videos, looking at comments, and viewing ads, without actively engaging with the content itself. Although passive, social media consumption can have a significant influence on consumer perceptions, awareness of all kinds, and behavioral intentions. With passive exposure to the Internet, users become familiar with products, services, and brands.

According to Chen *et al.* (2022), passive social media consumption affects users' emotional responses positively, since people are constantly exposed to entertaining, informative, and interesting content. Even without any kind of active engagement, users who are repeatedly exposed to content on social media become more familiar with and aware of products and services. Likewise, Zeqiri *et al.* (2025) indicated that constant exposure to social media marketing strengthens consumer awareness and engagement, as well as purchase intentions.

Besides that, Ermeç (2022) stated that positive attitudes towards social media content make consumers more likely to show purchase intentions and electronic Word-Of-Mouth behavior. If consumers are constantly being exposed to meaningful and emotionally interesting social media content, they are likely to develop positive attitudes towards the products and services promoted on social media. The passive absorption of educational and empathetic information may alleviate discomfort related to memorial planning and help consumers become more willing to prepare for the future. By viewing informative and family-oriented material repeatedly, young adults may be acquainted with memorial-related services and become better prepared to make decisions about financial investments.

Social Media Contribution

The social media contribution is the act of engaging with the available content through liking, reacting, commenting, sharing, and discussing the content online. Since contribution involves intentional engagement with the content, it indicates a higher involvement compared to passive consumption of content. Gutierrez and his colleagues (2023) observed that the use of active consumer-brand interactions has a significant effect on the intention to purchase, as the engagement process helps users develop better familiarity and trust in addition to emotional involvement with products and services. Because they actively engage in discussions and content

interactions, consumers are likely to develop more positive behavioral intentions towards brands.

Similarly, Zheng and his team (2022) stated that engaging customers positively influences their purchase intentions; however, the level of influence may differ based on different engagement types. For example, the act of commenting and sharing experiences creates a higher level of emotional engagement together with consumer trust than the mere consumption of the content. Ebrahimi and his co-authors (2023) emphasized that social media networks also allow consumers to compare products, find and review the available options, and learn from the personal experiences of others. The use of interactive participation enables consumers to collect feedback and evaluate products more effectively, thus increasing their confidence in making purchasing decisions. As the issue of memorial care services concerns emotions, the engagement of consumers in behavior may help in normalizing the discussions about the services of memorial care.

Social Media Creation

Social media creation refers to the development and sharing of original content by users across social networking platforms. This includes posting opinions, uploading photos or videos, sharing experiences, and initiating discussions regarding products or services. User-generated content is considered highly influential because consumers often perceive peer-created content as more authentic and trustworthy than direct organizational advertisements. Osman and Shamsuddin (2024) explained that young adults heavily rely on peer experiences, online reviews, and shared content when evaluating products and services. Similarly, Amini (2025) found that consumers actively participate in online communities by creating and sharing information that influences purchasing decisions among other users.

Similarly, Lestari and Nurhasanah (2025) revealed that social media interactions and user-generated recommendations significantly influence purchase intention because consumers perceive peer opinions as socially credible and relatable. User-generated content strengthens electronic word-of-mouth and increases collective awareness regarding products and services.

Within the context of private memorial lots, content creation may include sharing family experiences, reflections, recommendations, or educational information regarding memorial planning. Such content may influence other young adults by increasing familiarity and reducing stigma associated with discussing memorial preparation and long-term family planning.

Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention refers to the willingness or likelihood of consumers to purchase a product or service after evaluating available information, experiences, and perceptions. It reflects consumers' readiness to engage in future purchasing behavior and is commonly used in

marketing studies to predict actual consumer decisions (Lee & Kim, 2023). Purchase intention is often influenced by consumer attitudes, emotional responses, trust, perceived value, and social influence.

Patel and Sharma (2023) explained that social proof, customer testimonials, and peer validation significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions because individuals tend to rely on the opinions and experiences of others before making purchasing decisions. Consumers are more likely to consider products and services when they perceive social acceptance and trustworthiness. Similarly, Braza *et al.* (2022) found that emotional digital marketing strategies have a positive impact on the engagement level of customers as well as their buying behavior towards products related to family and remembrance. It is known that intention to buy is significantly influenced by the Internet marketing.

In the framework of this research, Ong *et al.* (2023) noted that interactive and attractive visual content encourages buyers to look for goods and services. Young people correspond a lot to recommendations from peers and reviews because it makes them trust and feel familiar with how it is promoted. In addition, in their work Septia and Surianto (2024) stated that social media marketing, comments in blogs, and FOMO influenced the intention to buy among young people. Therefore, constant exposure to digital content leads to curiosity and emotional engagement to the product.

However, purchase intention does not always translate to actual purchasing behavior since there are still other factors which might affect the consumers' final decisions like financial capacity to execute purchase, emotional readiness, cultural beliefs, and perceived necessity. This is more so for industries which require emotions from the consumers such as memorial services, where their purchasing decisions are long-term decisions based on emotions and family responsibility.

Within the context of purchasing private memorial lots, the consumers' purchase intention can be influenced by their knowledge of memorial lots, emotional preparedness and attitudes towards the process of buying memorial lots. Young consumers may initially have reservations to purchase memorial products as talk of death and preparation for the future is usually seen as being uncomfortable emotionally.

However, the authors opine that the effectiveness of informative and empathetic online marketing tactics will allow the young consumers to become receptive and ready to make memorial lot purchases.

According to existing research in the field of purchase intention, purchase intention is affected by various digital and psychological factors such as degree of engagement with the online content, emotional connection, trust, and social factors. There is a growing literature about purchase intention, but little research is available about the purchase intentions of young adults regarding private memorial lots in an online marketing context, especially in the Philippines.

In the Philippines, culture, family-oriented approach to decision-making and financial readiness also influence consumer behavior and impact of digital marketing on how consumers make decisions regarding whether or not to purchase goods or services online. Evidence is presented to suggest that social media engagement and digital marketing strategies are influential in how young adults approach private memorial lot purchases. The existing literature demonstrates that digital marketing and social media engagement are important factors that influence consumer behavior and purchase intention. The literature shows that engagement, emotional information, and interactive communication can facilitate trust, awareness, and intention.

Furthermore, the young generation is influenced by peer recommendations, social media, and their entire digital experience. While there is ample literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, there are very few studies that have focused on how social media and digital marketing affect young adults when it comes to making purchases regarding an emotionally sensitive product. Much of the available research has focused on retail, e-commerce, hospitality, or tourism, but with limited focus on memorials. There are also very few studies examining how social media interaction is influential in their purchasing decisions regarding memorial property in the Philippines.

Overall, there is very little in terms of existing studies on the subject that show how social media and digital marketing affect consumer purchasing intention in terms of purchasing a private memorial lot, which is an emotional product that has a long-term dimension. Additionally, limited empirical information is available on this subject regarding the Philippines, especially among young adults in Bukidnon Province. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategy, social media engagement, and purchasing intention toward private memorial lots.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the influence of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement on the purchase intention of young adults toward private memorial lots without manipulating any variable or establishing causation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted in Valencia City and Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Philippines, involving 440 young adults aged 18 to 39 years selected through stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation from the two cities. Data were gathered using a researcher-made structured survey questionnaire consisting of four parts: respondents' demographic profile, digital marketing strategies (content strategy, engagement strategy, and advertising strategy), social media engagement (consumption, contribution, and creation), and purchase intention toward private memorial lots. Responses were measured using a four-point scale (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly

Disagree). The instrument underwent content validation by experts in business administration, marketing, and research methodology and was subsequently pilot-tested among 30 young adults who were not included in the final sample. Reliability testing yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.929 for Digital Marketing Strategy, 0.973 for Social Media Engagement, and 0.933 for Purchase Intention, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2021).

Upon approval of the research protocol, questionnaires were administered personally to qualified respondents after securing their informed consent. Retrieved questionnaires were examined for completeness and consistency before encoding and statistical analysis. The gathered data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage to describe the respondents' demographic profile, weighted mean to determine the levels of digital marketing strategies, social media engagement, and purchase intention, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) to determine the significance and strength of the relationships among the variables, and multiple linear regression analysis to identify the significant predictors of purchase intention, with the level of significance set at 0.05. Throughout the conduct of the study, ethical standards were strictly observed by securing informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining respondent anonymity and confidentiality, and complying with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study together with their analysis and interpretation. The results are discussed in relation to the study's objectives and theoretical framework to determine the influence of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement on the purchase intention of young adults toward private memorial lots. The findings are presented through tables organized according to the specific objectives of the study. The respondents consisted of 440 young adults from Malaybalay City and Valencia City, Bukidnon.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, marital status, and occupation. The majority were 21–25 years old (41.4%), followed by those aged 18–20 years (34.1%), 26–30 years (17.0%), and 31–40 years (7.5%), indicating that the respondents were primarily young adults in their early twenties who are active users of digital technology and social media. Female respondents (59.3%) outnumbered males (40.7%), while most respondents were single (88.0%), followed by married (11.6%) and separated (0.5%). In terms of occupation, the majority were students (75.9%), followed by government employees (12.3%), private employees (8.4%), self-employed (2.3%), and those with no occupation (1.1%).

The predominance of students indicates that the

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Indicator		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	150	34.1
	21-25	182	41.4
	26-30	75	17.0
	31-40	33	7.5
Total		440	100.0
Sex	Male	179	40.7
	Female	261	59.3
Total		440	100.0
Marital Status	Single	387	88.0
	Married	51	11.6
	Separated	2	0.5
Total		440	100.0
Occupation	Student	334	75.9
	Private Employee	37	8.4
	Government Employee	54	12.3
	Self Employed	10	2.3
	None	5	1.1
Total		440	100.0

respondents are highly exposed to digital platforms, supporting Osman and Shamsuddin's (2024) finding that young adults frequently use social media for information searching, product evaluation, and purchasing decisions. These demographic characteristics are consistent with previous studies showing that young adults, particularly students and individuals in their early twenties, are the most active users of social media and digital platforms, making them an important market segment for digital marketing activities (Osman & Shamsuddin, 2024; Villanti *et al.*, 2017). Since this study focuses on the influence of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement on the purchase intention of private memorial lots, understanding the respondents' demographic profile provides valuable context for interpreting their perceptions, engagement behaviors, and purchase intentions.

Digital Marketing Strategies

As reflected in Table 2, digital marketing strategies were perceived to be consistently effective across the three dimensions examined, with Content Strategy obtaining the highest mean (3.10, "Agree/Effective"), followed by Engagement Strategy (3.06) and Advertising Strategy (3.02), all falling under the "Agree/Effective" category. The overall mean of 3.06, described as "Effective," indicates that respondents generally recognized the digital marketing efforts of private memorial lot providers as successful in delivering information, engaging prospective customers, and promoting their services through online platforms. This pattern suggests that providers have established a balanced digital marketing approach, with

greater emphasis on informative and engaging content than on promotional advertising. The relatively lower mean for advertising strategy implies that while online advertisements are considered effective, there remains an opportunity to improve their creativity, personalization, and relevance to strengthen consumers' purchase intentions. These findings further imply that content-driven and engagement-oriented marketing practices play a more influential role in shaping consumer perceptions than advertising efforts alone, highlighting the importance of developing meaningful online interactions alongside promotional campaigns.

This pattern is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that digital marketing strategies centered on valuable content and customer engagement significantly enhance consumer responses and purchase intention. Rosário and Dias (2023) found that effective digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms, strengthens customer engagement and positively influences consumers' intentions to purchase. Likewise, Tafesse and Wood (2023) emphasized that informative content and meaningful customer interactions are fundamental drivers of digital marketing effectiveness, fostering stronger customer relationships and increasing marketing performance. The comparatively lower rating for advertising strategy also aligns with evidence suggesting that consumers are becoming more responsive to authentic, interactive, and personalized digital experiences than to traditional promotional advertisements, underscoring the need for businesses to continuously refine their advertising approaches to sustain consumer interest and improve purchase intentions.

Table 2: Total Summary of mean score of Digital Marketing Strategies

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Content Strategy	3.10	Agree	Effective
Engagement Strategy	3.06	Agree	Effective
Advertising Strategy	3.02	Agree	Effective
Overall Mean	3.06	Agree	Effective

LEGEND

Rating Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
3.21 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Highly Effective
2.61 – 3.20	Agree (A)	Effective
1.76 – 2.60	Disagree (D)	Less Effective
1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Not Effective

Social Media Engagement Related to Online Marketing of Private Memorial Lots

As reflected in Table 3, social media engagement related to the online marketing of private memorial lots varied across the three dimensions examined, with Consumption obtaining the highest mean (3.02, “Agree/Engaged”), followed by Contribution (2.64, “Agree/Engaged”), while Creation recorded the lowest mean (2.53, “Disagree/Less Engaged”). The overall mean of 2.65, described as “Engaged,” indicates that young adults generally interact with social media content related to private memorial lots, although their participation is concentrated more on consuming and responding to content than on generating their own. This pattern suggests that respondents are

more comfortable viewing, reading, and reacting to digital marketing content than actively creating posts or sharing personal experiences related to memorial lot services. The comparatively lower level of content creation implies that although social media platforms effectively facilitate audience engagement, they have yet to fully motivate users to become active content creators. This finding highlights the need for private memorial lot providers to strengthen user-generated content initiatives, such as customer testimonials, interactive campaigns, and storytelling activities, to encourage deeper consumer participation and enhance the authenticity of their digital marketing efforts. This pattern suggests that respondents are more comfortable viewing, reading, and reacting to digital

Table 3: Total Summary of mean score of Social Media Engagement to Online Marketing Related to Private Memorial Lots.

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Consumption	3.02	Agree	Engage
Contribution	2.64	Agree	Engage
Creation	2.53	Disagree	Less Engage
Overall Mean	2.65	Agree	Engage

LEGEND

Rating Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
3.21 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Engaged
2.61 – 3.20	Agree	Engaged
1.76 – 2.60	Disagree	Less Engaged
1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not Engage

marketing content than actively creating posts or sharing personal experiences related to memorial lot services. The comparatively lower level of content creation implies that although social media platforms effectively facilitate audience engagement, they have yet to fully motivate users to become active content creators. This finding highlights the need for private memorial lot providers to strengthen user-generated content initiatives, such as customer testimonials, interactive campaigns, and storytelling activities, to encourage deeper consumer participation and enhance the authenticity of their digital marketing efforts.

This pattern is consistent with previous studies indicating that consumers most frequently engage with social media through content consumption and interaction rather

than content creation. Dolan *et al.* (2019) explained that social media engagement commonly progresses from consuming content to contributing through reactions and comments, while creating original content represents the least frequent form of engagement because it requires greater personal effort, confidence, and involvement. Similarly, Rosário and Dias (2023) found that meaningful social media interactions strengthen customer engagement, increase trust, and positively influence purchase intention. The comparatively lower level of content creation observed in this study further suggests that businesses offering emotionally sensitive products, such as private memorial lots, should focus on developing strategies that encourage authentic user participation and storytelling, thereby transforming passive audiences into

active brand advocates and fostering stronger consumer relationships.

Purchase Intention of Private Memorial Lots Among Young Adults

As reflected in Table 4, purchase intention toward private memorial lots among young adults was consistently rated under the “Agree/Low Purchase Intention” category, with an overall mean of 3.03. The highest-rated indicator was

Table 4: Purchase Intension of Private Memorial Lots Among Young Adults.

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
I am likely to consider purchasing a private memorial lot in the near future.	3.13	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I would recommend purchasing a private memorial lot to my family or friends.	3.08	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I feel confident in making a decision to buy a memorial lot based on the information I see online.	2.96	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I am willing to explore different memorial lot options after seeing online content and advertisements.	3.04	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I would prioritize providers that have active and informative social media content.	3.07	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I intend to visit or inquire more about memorial lots I see advertised on social media.	2.99	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I am likely to respond positively to promotions or offers presented by memorial lot providers online.	2.98	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I feel that engaging with social media content increases my likelihood of purchasing a memorial lot.	3.02	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I plan to seriously consider acquiring a memorial lot within the next few years.	3.04	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
I am inclined to purchase a private memorial lot based on the digital marketing and social media information I encounter.	2.96	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
Overall Mean	3.03	Agree	Low Purchase Intention

LEGEND

Rating Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
3.21 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Purchase Intention
2.61 – 3.20	Agree	Low Purchase Intention
1.76 – 2.60	Disagree	Very Low Purchase Intention
1.00 – 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not Engage

considering the purchase of a private memorial lot in the near future (3.13), followed by recommending memorial lots to family or friends (3.08). Meanwhile, the lowest-rated indicators were confidence in purchasing based on online information and being inclined to purchase based on digital marketing and social media content (both 2.96). These findings suggest that while young adults are receptive to considering and recommending private memorial lots, digital marketing alone is insufficient to motivate actual purchase decisions. This implies that providers should strengthen trust through credible information, customer testimonials, transparent communication, and value-driven campaigns to encourage stronger purchase intentions. This finding is also consistent with Rosário and Dias (2023), who reported that digital marketing and social media engagement enhance brand awareness, trust, and purchase intention. Similarly, Huang *et al.* (2024) found that consumers are more likely to develop purchase intentions when digital marketing provides relevant, credible, and persuasive information, highlighting the importance of trust-building strategies in influencing purchase decisions.

Correlation analysis of Digital Marketing Strategy, Social Media Engagement, and Purchase Intention of Private Memorial lots among Young Adults

The correlation analysis, as depicted in Table 5, revealed that digital marketing strategy, as a whole, was moderately and significantly correlated with purchase intention ($r = 0.595$, $p < 0.001$), with all three dimensions yielding significant positive correlations: engagement strategy ($r = 0.564$), advertising strategy ($r = 0.510$), and content strategy ($r = 0.470$). Likewise, social media engagement demonstrated a moderate positive and significant relationship with purchase intention ($r = 0.497$, $p < 0.001$), with all three dimensions also showing significant positive correlations: creation ($r = 0.476$), consumption ($r = 0.450$), and contribution ($r = 0.445$). These findings indicate that higher levels of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement are consistently associated with stronger purchase intention among young adults. Notably, engagement strategy exhibited the strongest relationship among the digital marketing dimensions, while creation showed the highest association among the social media engagement dimensions, suggesting

that meaningful customer interaction and active user participation play important roles in influencing purchase intention. This pattern implies that effective digital marketing and

Table 5: Correlation analysis of Digital Marketing Strategy, Social Media Engagement, and Purchase Intention of Private Memorial lots among Young Adults

Independent Variables Correlated with Purchase Intentions	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Digital Marketing Strategy	0.595**	< 0.001
Content Strategy	0.470**	< 0.001
Engagement Strategy	0.564**	< 0.001
Advertising Strategy	0.510**	< 0.001
Social Media Engagement to Online Marketing Related to Private Memorial lots	0.497**	< 0.001
Consumption	0.450**	< 0.001
Contribution	0.445**	< 0.001
Creation	0.476**	< 0.001

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

active social media engagement are important drivers of purchase intention among young adults. The stronger relationship of engagement strategy highlights the value of interactive communication in encouraging purchase decisions, while the higher association of content creation suggests that active participation with brand-related content can further strengthen consumers' intention to purchase. These findings are consistent with Rosário and Dias (2023), who reported that digital marketing strategies and social media engagement enhance purchase intention by increasing trust, awareness, and customer interaction. Likewise, Huang *et al.* (2024) found that interactive digital marketing positively influences consumers' purchase decisions, while Dolan *et al.* (2019) emphasized that higher levels of social media engagement strengthen consumer–brand relationships, leading to more favorable purchase intentions.

Thus, H_{01} , which states that there is no significant relationship between digital marketing strategy, social media engagement, and purchase intention of private memorial lots among young adults, is rejected. The findings confirm that both digital marketing strategy and social media engagement are significantly associated with purchase intention, indicating that strengthening these marketing efforts can enhance young adults' intention to purchase private memorial lots.

CONCLUSION

The respondents were predominantly single female students aged 21–25 years, indicating that the study mainly represented young adults who are active users of digital technologies and social media. This demographic profile suggests that the respondents are highly exposed to digital platforms, making them an appropriate group for examining the influence of digital marketing strategies and social media engagement on purchase intention.

Digital marketing strategies employed by private memorial lot providers were perceived as effective, with content strategy receiving the highest evaluation, followed by engagement strategy and advertising strategy. This indicates that providers have successfully utilized digital platforms to deliver information, engage potential

customers, and promote their services, although online advertising still has room for improvement through more creative, personalized, and relevant campaigns.

Social media engagement related to the online marketing of private memorial lots was generally engaged, with respondents showing higher levels of content consumption and contribution than content creation. This suggests that young adults are more likely to view, read, and interact with existing social media content than create their own, highlighting the need for providers to encourage greater user-generated content and interactive participation.

Purchase intention toward private memorial lots among young adults remained low despite the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and the respondents' engagement with social media. This indicates that while digital marketing successfully creates awareness and interest, actual purchase decisions are also influenced by other factors such as trust, financial readiness, perceived value, and personal priorities.

Digital marketing strategy and social media engagement were found to have significant positive relationships with purchase intention. Among the digital marketing dimensions, engagement strategy showed the strongest relationship with purchase intention, while creation demonstrated the strongest relationship among the social media engagement dimensions. This confirms that strengthening interactive digital marketing efforts and encouraging active consumer participation can positively influence young adults' intention to purchase private memorial lots. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between digital marketing strategy, social media engagement, and purchase intention was rejected.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Private memorial lot providers should strengthen customer engagement through interactive social media campaigns, personalized communication, and timely responses to consumer inquiries. They should also

encourage customer testimonials and user-generated content to increase trust, credibility, and purchase intention among young adults.

2. Marketing practitioners and managers should develop informative, emotionally sensitive, and consumer-centered digital marketing campaigns that emphasize family preparedness and long-term planning. Greater use of targeted advertising and interactive online content may further improve consumer engagement and purchasing intentions.

3. Young adult consumers are encouraged to evaluate digital information critically and seek reliable sources before making long-term investment decisions regarding memorial lots. Increased awareness of financial preparedness and memorial planning may help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions.

4. Local government agencies and policymakers should promote ethical digital marketing practices and support programs that improve digital literacy, consumer protection, and responsible online advertising within the memorial care industry. Collaboration with private memorial lot providers may also help increase public awareness regarding the value of advance memorial planning.

5. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate additional factors that may influence purchase intention, including financial capability, cultural beliefs, perceived value, trust, and emotional readiness. Similar studies may also be conducted in other provinces, regions, or service industries to validate and extend the findings of the present study.

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