



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Emory Daniel,
Appalachian State University, United States

REVIEWED BY

Muhammad Ghalih,
Southern Taiwan University of Science and
Technology, Taiwan
Shengyu Gu,
Huizhou University, China

*CORRESPONDENCE

Pongsakorn Limna
✉ pongsakorn.l@ptu.ac.th
Yarnaphat Shaengchart
✉ yarnaphat.s@ptu.ac.th
Tanpat Kraiwanit
✉ tanpat@ptu.ac.th
Rattawut Nivornusit
✉ rattawut.n@rsu.ac.th

RECEIVED 09 July 2025

ACCEPTED 01 October 2025

PUBLISHED 20 October 2025

CITATION

Limna P, Shaengchart Y, Kraiwanit T,
Asanprakit S and Nivornusit R (2025)
Muketing: the fusion of *Mutelu* and marketing
in e-commerce—trends in Thailand's faith
economy.
Front. Commun. 10:1662524.
doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2025.1662524

COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Limna, Shaengchart, Kraiwanit,
Asanprakit and Nivornusit. This is an
open-access article distributed under the
terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution
License \(CC BY\)](#). The use, distribution or
reproduction in other forums is permitted,
provided the original author(s) and the
copyright owner(s) are credited and that the
original publication in this journal is cited, in
accordance with accepted academic
practice. No use, distribution or reproduction
is permitted which does not comply with
these terms.

Muketing: the fusion of *Mutelu* and marketing in e-commerce—trends in Thailand's faith economy

Pongsakorn Limna^{1*}, Yarnaphat Shaengchart^{1*},
Tanpat Kraiwanit^{1*}, Saranchana Asanprakit¹ and
Rattawut Nivornusit^{2*}

¹International College, Pathumthani University, Pathum Thani, Thailand, ²Digital Economy Program, Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand

Background: The intersection of traditional spiritual beliefs and digital commerce is reshaping consumer behavior in Thailand. Muketing—a blend of *Mutelu* spirituality and modern marketing—has emerged as a distinct cultural-marketing phenomenon within the country's expanding faith economy. This study explores the emerging phenomenon of Muketing within Thailand's e-commerce sector.

Methods: This study employed a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews with twelve Thai consumers who actively engage in online shopping through e-commerce platforms. Content analysis was conducted to identify key themes related to consumer attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing behaviors.

Results: The findings reveal that Muketing enhances consumer attitudes through emotional and cultural relevance, fosters trust via perceived authenticity and spiritual alignment, and boosts engagement through interactive and symbolic content. Participants reported increased purchase intentions when products incorporated rituals, spiritual messaging, or symbolic imagery tied to traditional beliefs.

Conclusion: The study demonstrates that Muketing influences purchasing behavior within the study's sample by integrating local belief systems with modern marketing practices, thereby fostering culturally resonant consumer bonds. When practiced authentically and ethically, spiritual branding can generate meaningful commercial outcomes. Further research is needed to examine its underlying mechanisms and assess its broader applicability across diverse contexts and consumer groups.

KEYWORDS

muketing, e-commerce, attitudes, trust, engagement, purchasing behavior

1 Introduction

The “*Mutelu*” industry in Thailand is not only expanding but also undergoing a notable transformation. Originally derived from an Indonesian horror film “*Mutelu: Occult War*,” the term “*Mutelu*” encompasses a wide array of belief-based products and services, such as amulets, talismans, astrology, and fortune-telling. In the Thai context, this practice reflects a syncretic blend of Buddhist, Brahmanist, animist, and occult traditions. Over time, it has

evolved from a niche spiritual practice into a powerful cultural phenomenon and a growing economic sector (Ajanapanya, 2024; The Nation, 2024). In the digital era, electronic commerce (e-commerce)—the online buying and selling of goods and services that enables businesses to operate seamlessly across borders and reach a global customer base—has emerged as a fundamental driver of economic development in emerging markets. It breaks down geographical barriers, increases efficiency, reduces costs, and enhances customer experiences. In developed economies, e-commerce has transformed retail, manufacturing, services, and other sectors through digital marketing, data analytics, and modern supply chains. In developing countries, it helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) overcome infrastructure challenges, expand into new markets, and create jobs in logistics and technology. The rise of mobile commerce and digital payments has also improved financial inclusion for underserved populations. Furthermore, e-commerce strengthens economic resilience during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting continued business operations and contributing to sustainable development (Amornkitvikai et al., 2022; Otarinia, 2024). In Thailand, this transformation has given rise to a unique cultural-marketing phenomenon known as “Muketing”—a fusion of *Mutelu* and modern marketing strategies. This blend illustrates how deeply rooted cultural beliefs are being reinterpreted and embedded within digital business environments to shape consumer behavior, strengthen brand loyalty, and offer distinctive online shopping experiences. At its core, *Mutelu* encompasses a wide range of spiritual practices and symbols, including astrology, numerology, color symbolism, sacred rituals, and talismanic objects. These elements are believed to influence various aspects of life—ranging from personal well-being to financial prosperity—and play a significant role in guiding Thai consumers’ decisions. Particularly among younger, digitally engaged demographics, *Mutelu* practices have become increasingly mainstream, creating a fertile context for marketers to integrate spiritual relevance into e-commerce strategies. This emerging practice of Muketing reflects a broader cultural adaptation within Thailand’s rapidly evolving digital economy (Ajanapanya, 2024; Phatwang and Chumkate, 2023; Srimeethum and Setthajit, 2023; Srimeethum et al., 2025; The Nation, 2024).

Muketing manifests across multiple dimensions of Thailand’s e-commerce ecosystem (Ajanapanya, 2024; Malasri and Metharom, 2023). Product design and branding often incorporate spiritual symbolism, such as lucky colors, amulet-inspired packaging, and product names that convey charm and prosperity (Phriwanrat, 2023). In addition, a popular trend on social media involves celebrities and influencers using products such as astrology-themed wallpapers and gemstone bracelets, which are believed to bring luck in various aspects of life. This practice has sparked widespread imitation among consumers, turning into a powerful market trend that significantly influences purchasing behavior (Srimeethum and Setthajit, 2023). Far from being a passing trend, Muketing represents a strategic, culturally adaptive approach that leverages spiritual traditions to foster deeper consumer connections in Thailand’s digital economy. As cultural identity continues to influence consumer behavior across emerging markets, the ability to integrate local belief systems into digital commerce strategies offers significant value for both domestic and international businesses. Given its growing impact, Muketing is a critical topic that warrants further research and exploration (Amornkitvikai et al., 2022;

Chowdhury, 2024; Hanphichai, 2025; Rakhval-Müller and Fedotova, 2024).

Despite its growing prevalence and practical relevance, Muketing remains an underexplored area in academic research. Existing studies on e-commerce and consumer behavior in Southeast Asia often focus on technological adoption, logistics, or platform dynamics, while overlooking the cultural and spiritual dimensions of digital marketing. For instance, Napawut et al. (2022) investigated how electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) mediates the relationship between digital marketing activities and purchase intention among Shopee users in Thailand. The study found that electronic promotion had a stronger impact on e-WOM than content marketing, and e-WOM significantly influenced customers’ buying intentions. In addition, Sriwilai (2023) investigated the impact of five dimensions of logistics service quality—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and timeliness—on customer satisfaction in Thailand’s online shopping sector. The study found that overall logistics service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in e-commerce. Still, there is limited empirical investigation into how Muketing shapes consumer perceptions, drives purchase decisions, or contributes to brand differentiation in Thailand’s digital economy. This qualitative study aims to explore Thai consumers’ perceptions, experiences, and behavioral responses toward Muketing—defined here as the integration of *Mutelu*, encompassing Thai spiritual beliefs, auspicious symbols, and ritual practices—within the e-commerce sector. By embedding these elements into branding and consumer engagement, Muketing transforms ordinary consumption into experiences of symbolic meaning and emotional reassurance, making it a critical lens for understanding online consumer behavior in Thailand. The goal is to understand how Muketing influences consumer attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior in the context of Thailand’s rapidly evolving digital marketplace. By exploring how spiritual beliefs are integrated into online retail practices and how they influence consumer behavior, the research contributes to the broader discourse on cultural adaptation in digital business strategies. This inquiry not only enriches academic literature but also offers practical insights for businesses, marketers, entrepreneurs, and international brands seeking to navigate culturally complex markets in the digital age.

2 Literature review

In recent years, the convergence of cultural beliefs and digital commerce has given rise to novel marketing phenomena, particularly in emerging economies like Thailand. One such phenomenon is Muketing, a term coined to describe the integration of *Mutelu* into digital marketing strategies. This qualitative study seeks to explore Thai consumers’ perceptions, experiences, and behavioral responses toward Muketing within the context of e-commerce. The aim is to understand how such culturally embedded marketing approaches influence consumer attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior amid Thailand’s dynamic and increasingly digitalized marketplace. To establish a theoretical foundation for this inquiry, the following literature review examines key themes related to digital marketing, cultural influences on consumer behavior, and the role of spiritual beliefs in shaping purchasing decisions in the Thai context.

2.1 Muketing in e-commerce landscape

Despite the profound impact of the digital revolution in Thailand, a significant portion of the population continues to adhere strongly to traditional beliefs associated with good fortune and the influence of supernatural forces and sacred objects—collectively known in Thai as *Mutelu*. The *Mutelu* encompasses a rich tapestry of beliefs and actions that, while not formally part of orthodox Buddhist doctrine, are deeply rooted in Thai culture and are centered on attracting good fortune, protection, and blessings. As a manifestation of Thailand's enduring faith economy—sometimes referred to as the *Mutelu* economy, which encompasses commercial activities driven by spiritual beliefs and practices—*Mutelu* has evolved into a vibrant market force (Analytics and Intelligence Research, 2025; Hanphichai, 2025; The Nation, 2024). A 2024 survey by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC) estimated the *Mutelu*-related market, including fortune-telling, feng shui, and spiritual rituals, to be worth between THB 10–15 billion, with over 80% of respondents actively engaging in related activities (Analytics and Intelligence Research, 2025). Importantly, the persistence of *Mutelu* underscores the cultural resilience of traditional beliefs amid rapid digital transformation. Far from diminishing, these spiritual practices have been repurposed and integrated into modern platforms, enabling businesses to embed culturally resonant elements into digital marketing strategies—referred to as Muketing. Beyond consumerism, *Mutelu* serves as a coping mechanism during periods of financial instability or personal uncertainty; nearly half of respondents reported turning to these practices when facing investment losses or economic hardship. This suggests that Muketing is not simply a passing trend, but a strategic response to enduring psychological, emotional, and cultural needs—anchored in Thailand's expanding faith economy (Analytics and Intelligence Research, 2025; The Nation, 2024).

The effective implementation of Muketing requires a comprehensive understanding of its foundational principles, brand-related benefits, ethical considerations, and context-specific execution within the e-commerce environment. At its core, Muketing emphasizes the creation of emotional connections and brand differentiation through faith-based narratives that resonate with consumers' cultural values. Rather than offering superficial promises of luck, Muketing appeals to deeper psychological needs such as emotional security, confidence, and a sense of agency in navigating uncertainty. When grounded in authentic cultural insight, it can enhance brand memorability, foster consumer loyalty, and enable expansion into previously untapped segments. However, its effectiveness is contingent on a balanced value proposition—one that upholds both the tangible quality of products or services and their perceived spiritual significance. Importantly, the ethical dimension of Muketing cannot be overstated. Brands must avoid trivializing or commodifying spiritual practices, and refrain from stereotyping consumers as merely superstitious. Demonstrating authenticity, cultural intelligence, and respectful engagement is not only ethically responsible but also a source of competitive advantage. Companies that approach Muketing with sincerity and empathy are more likely to earn lasting trust and secure long-term market relevance. In the context of e-commerce, Muketing has found particularly fertile ground for growth. Digital platforms such as Facebook and TikTok Shop enable brands to deliver personalized, spiritually themed experiences at scale. Examples include astrologically timed flash sales,

live-streamed rituals for product blessings, and curated “lucky” product bundles. These practices embed *Mutelu*-inspired narratives into the digital consumer journey, offering culturally resonant value in an engaging format. The accessibility and viral potential of spiritual content online further enhance consumer interaction, making e-commerce not only a transactional platform but also a cultural amplifier for Muketing in Thailand's digital economy (Chowdhury, 2024; Malasri and Metharom, 2023; Siangchokyoo et al., 2025; Tansiri, 2024; Thongpradap et al., 2025).

In sum, Muketing operates at the intersection of tradition and modernity, revealing both opportunities and tensions within Thailand's e-commerce landscape. On one hand, it exemplifies cultural continuity by embedding *Mutelu* beliefs into digital marketing strategies, thereby reinforcing consumer trust and loyalty through spiritually resonant narratives. On the other hand, it raises contradictions around commodification, authenticity, and the ethical boundaries of integrating sacred practices into commercial domains. As such, Muketing highlights the resilience of traditional belief systems in shaping consumer behavior, while also inviting critical reflection on the responsibilities of businesses navigating the delicate balance between cultural respect and market expansion.

2.2 Belief, ritual, and magical thinking frameworks

Belief, ritual, and magical thinking provide a critical conceptual foundation for situating Muketing within consumer research. Rather than treating spiritual motifs as decorative marketing add-ons, these frameworks emphasize how consumption can be infused with cultural logics that reframe everyday choices as symbolically and emotionally significant. In the Thai context, *Mutelu* practices operate as guiding belief systems that bridge the material and spiritual realms, offering not only symbolic value but also psychosocial reassurance during conditions of uncertainty (Hanphichai, 2025; James et al., 2011). Anthropological scholarship has long recognized that rituals function as mechanisms of cultural continuity and social order, transforming mundane practices—such as eating, gifting, or purchasing—into acts of meaning-making that reinforce community identity (Malasri and Metharom, 2023). Within digital commerce, these ritualized behaviors blur the boundary between shopping and spiritual practice, embedding products in cycles of offering, blessing, and auspicious timing.

Magical thinking extends this logic by explaining how consumers attribute causal efficacy to objects, numbers, and rituals. Far from being irrational, such practices can be interpreted through the lens of behavioral economics and cultural psychology as adaptive responses to uncertainty, risk, and aspiration. The attribution of luck or protective power to products is thus not a cognitive error but a culturally legitimized mechanism for restoring agency and fostering optimism (Analytics and Intelligence Research, 2025; James et al., 2011; The Nation, 2024). In this sense, Muketing intersects with theories of symbolic consumption, whereby goods serve as carriers of cultural narratives and emotional security.

A critical insight across these frameworks is the role of authenticity. While spiritual cues can generate powerful affective connections, their impact depends on whether they are perceived as culturally sincere or merely commodified. As Soleimani (2022), Oğuz

(2025), and Yi and Oh (2022) highlight, consumers are increasingly adept at detecting superficial appropriations of sacred elements, and when such practices are judged inauthentic, they undermine both brand trust and platform credibility. Conversely, when rituals and belief cues are deeply integrated and contextually sensitive, they operate as moral signifiers of reliability and integrity, echoing Salari's (2024) observation that digital trust is increasingly anchored in value-laden rather than purely technical assurances.

Synthesizing these perspectives, Muketing can be conceptualized as an adaptive cultural strategy that mobilizes belief systems, ritual practices, and magical thinking to reconfigure digital consumption. By transforming shopping into a spiritually anchored and emotionally resonant experience, Muketing positions brands not only as providers of products but also as participants in sustaining cultural traditions and social meaning. This elevates marketing from transactional persuasion to cultural performance, where authenticity, ritual continuity, and symbolic efficacy determine long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

2.3 Trust and engagement in online environments

In the context of online environments and e-commerce, trust and engagement are deeply interconnected and serve as foundational pillars for sustainable success (Farhat et al., 2025; Kennedy et al., 2022). Trust is a critical prerequisite for consumer engagement, as users are more inclined to interact with platforms they perceive as secure, reliable, and credible. This perception mitigates common concerns about online transactions, including data privacy, fraud, and product authenticity (Handoyo, 2024; Morić et al., 2024). Conversely, positive engagement experiences—such as responsive customer support and valuable content—play a vital role in reinforcing trust, gradually fostering consumer confidence and platform loyalty (Busalim and Asadi, 2025; Kartomo, 2024; Xia and Shannon, 2025). High levels of trust are directly associated with improved performance metrics, including increased conversion rates, repeat purchases, and enhanced e-WOM (Handoyo, 2024; Tafolli et al., 2025; Velnadar et al., 2024). To cultivate trust, e-commerce platforms must adopt a multifaceted approach encompassing robust security measures (e.g., secure payment gateways and two-factor authentication), transparency in product representation and pricing, social proof through customer reviews and influencer endorsements, and high website usability standards, such as mobile optimization and intuitive interfaces. Furthermore, reliable customer service, brand consistency, and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility can significantly enhance consumer trust (Li and Li, 2024; Mayayise, 2024; Salari, 2024; Soleimani, 2022).

Once trust is established, businesses can enhance customer engagement through a range of personalization strategies, such as tailored product recommendations and customized content experiences. Interactive features—including user-generated content and live shopping events—also contribute to deeper consumer involvement (Li et al., 2025; Ramos and Ramos, 2025; Rosário et al., 2024; Rowi et al., 2024). In addition, loyalty programs, gamification elements, and omnichannel integration help reinforce engagement by delivering consistent and rewarding experiences across multiple touchpoints (Cheng et al., 2023; Hua et al., 2019; Lopes et al., 2023).

Proactive communication—encompassing real-time notifications, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered support, and active social media integration—plays a crucial role in sustaining ongoing customer interaction. Collectively, these strategies not only promote trust and engagement but also drive long-term customer retention and provide a competitive advantage in the increasingly dynamic digital marketplace (Binlibdah, 2024; Muhammad and Stukalina, 2024; Raji et al., 2024; Rosário et al., 2024; Rowi et al., 2024; Yum and Kim, 2024).

In relation to Muketing, trust and engagement in online environments acquire distinctive cultural and symbolic dimensions. Spiritualized marketing practices, such as astrologically timed promotions or product blessing rituals, can foster a sense of authenticity and intimacy that strengthens consumer trust by aligning commercial offerings with culturally embedded values. Yet, these same practices also generate tensions: while they enhance engagement through culturally resonant narratives, they risk being perceived as exploitative if reduced to superficial gimmicks or profit-driven theatrics. This duality highlights a contradiction at the heart of Muketing—its capacity to inspire both profound emotional connection and skepticism about the commodification of sacred beliefs. From a theoretical perspective, this interplay situates Muketing within consumer culture theory, where trust is not only built through functional assurances of security and reliability but also through symbolic affirmation of identity, belief, and community. Engagement, therefore, extends beyond transactional interaction to encompass affective, ritualized participation in digital spaces where commerce and spirituality intersect. Ultimately, Muketing illustrates how trust and engagement are renegotiated in e-commerce: they are no longer derived solely from rational assurances of safety and value, but also from the cultural legitimacy and ethical integrity with which businesses embed spiritual traditions into the digital marketplace.

2.4 Consumer attitudes and purchase behavior

E-commerce has significantly reshaped consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior, fundamentally transforming the way individuals discover, evaluate, and acquire goods and services. This transformation is driven by several key factors, including the growing demand for convenience, personalized experiences, technological advancements, and evolving expectations around transparency, ethics, and security (Gupta et al., 2023; Oğuz, 2025; Silva, 2025). Consumers now expect instant and seamless access to products and services, with mobile devices playing a central role in enabling shopping at any time and from any location. The integration of AI into recommendation systems has enhanced personalization, allowing businesses to tailor product suggestions and marketing communications based on individual preferences and past behavior (Otarinia, 2024; Raji et al., 2024; Wolniak et al., 2024). Online reviews, user ratings, and influencer content, has become a critical element in the decision-making process, often holding more weight than traditional advertising (Migkos et al., 2025). At the same time, the ease of price comparison across platforms has heightened price sensitivity, prompting consumers to actively seek out discounts, promotions, and competitive pricing (Srivastava and Sinha, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Ethical and environmental considerations are increasingly influencing consumer preferences, with many individuals willing to pay a

premium for sustainably sourced products and brands that align with their personal values (Cheung and To, 2021; Lim et al., 2023). Privacy has also emerged as a crucial concern, with consumers expecting clear data policies and secure handling of their personal information (Akour et al., 2022; Morić et al., 2024).

As purchasing behavior evolves, e-commerce continues to dominate, enabling product discovery, comparison, and transaction in real time. Social media platforms have increasingly evolved into influential channels for social commerce (s-commerce), allowing consumers to engage in direct in-app purchasing, often shaped by livestream marketing and endorsements from social media influencers (Herzallah et al., 2025; Migkos et al., 2025). Additionally, consumers demand a variety of payment options, including mobile wallets and “Buy Now, Pay Later” services, as well as consistent experiences across multiple touchpoints—both digital and physical—reflecting a strong preference for omnichannel integration (Hopali et al., 2022). The growing popularity of subscription-based services reflects a shift toward convenience and ongoing value, while the widespread expectation for home delivery—even for traditionally offline or bulky items—continues to redefine logistics and service standards (Asdecker, 2021; Faccia et al., 2023; Iyengar et al., 2022). Furthermore, as online information becomes more accessible, consumers are taking a more independent approach to shopping by researching products and reading reviews before making a purchase. This shift toward informed decision-making increases the need for clear and detailed product information, such as thorough descriptions, high-quality images, and informative videos (Gupta et al., 2023; Kusi et al., 2022).

Key drivers that influence online purchase decisions include platform design and user experience, with fast-loading, intuitive, and mobile-optimized platforms. High-quality product content, responsive customer service, flexible return policies, and clear pricing strategies also contribute to consumer trust and satisfaction. Security and transparency regarding data protection remain essential, as does the presence of social proof in the form of user-generated content and reviews. Personalization, convenience, and the ability to navigate the shopping journey across channels without friction are now seen as basic expectations rather than added benefits. In this dynamic and rapidly evolving digital landscape, businesses that recognize and respond to these shifts in consumer behavior are better positioned to cultivate loyalty, drive engagement, and achieve sustained success in the competitive e-commerce environment (Mayayise, 2024; Surjono, 2024; Yadav et al., 2024).

In the context of Muketing, evolving consumer attitudes and purchase behavior reflect not only rational preferences for convenience, personalization, and security but also cultural orientations toward meaning, spirituality, and emotional assurance. While conventional e-commerce strategies emphasize efficiency and functionality, Muketing taps into deeper symbolic drivers by embedding Mutelu-inspired narratives into the shopping journey. Practices such as spiritually “blessed” products, astrologically aligned promotions, or influencer endorsements framed through sacred symbolism align consumption with broader cultural values, thereby reshaping purchase decisions beyond price sensitivity or product quality alone. Yet, this convergence of commerce and spirituality introduces tensions: consumers may embrace Muketing for the sense of empowerment and emotional stability it provides, but they may also question the authenticity of brands that appear to exploit sacred traditions for profit. Theoretically, this duality can be understood

through consumer culture theory, which highlights how purchase behavior is informed not only by utilitarian calculations but also by symbolic meaning-making within cultural systems. Muketing thus demonstrates how e-commerce is evolving into a hybrid space where rational decision-making coexists with ritualized, affective consumption—underscoring both the opportunities for differentiation and the ethical challenges of commercializing belief.

2.5 Successful Muketing case studies in e-commerce

The integration of cultural and spiritual symbolism into marketing strategies—known as Muketing—demonstrates how brands can move beyond superficial cultural references to create meaningful consumer connections. The Pink Lady Apples campaign during Chinese New Year exemplifies this approach by embedding Thai *Mutelu* beliefs and Chinese rituals into its marketing. Through packaging that featured auspicious symbols, such as a vibrant pink color and two red dragons symbolizing “double dragons bringing good news,” the campaign resonated with traditional spiritual practices. Strategic timing encouraged consumers to incorporate the apples into ritual offerings, further amplified by endorsements from spiritual influencers and fortune tellers. This culturally embedded strategy transformed a commodity into a symbolic representation of prosperity and cultural continuity, resulting in the sale of over 5,000 boxes within a single week (Createx House, n.d.).

Similarly, MK Restaurants adopted Muketing not merely as a promotional device but as a holistic business strategy. Rebranding four of its outlets as MongKol restaurants (“MongKol” meaning “auspicious” in Thai), the company integrated lucky numbers, colors, and auspicious dates into its core identity and physical environment. The initiative extended to the introduction of five special “auspicious offering” sets for family celebrations during Chinese New Year, following a prior year’s success in which 40,000 sets were sold and sales increased by 25 percent. By embedding Muketing into tangible spaces and product offerings, MK created an immersive customer experience that extended beyond surface-level messaging. This case illustrates how Muketing, when aligned with cultural rituals and consumer values, can strengthen brand loyalty and position a business as a trusted participant in spiritual and festive traditions (The Nation, 2025).

In contrast, DTAC’s personalized lucky number campaign underscores how Muketing can be combined with digital innovation to expand consumer engagement. Partnering with numerologist Ajarn Chang, DTAC launched a “number health check” platform that personalized mobile numbers based on three numerological theories—numerical sums, pair sequences, and astrological alignment. By curating individualized options from over 100,000 possible numbers, the initiative moved beyond generic auspicious offerings to provide tailored spiritual alignment in areas such as finance, career, and relationships. Supported by a multi-channel media strategy—including television, Facebook Live fortune-telling, and retail partnerships—the campaign successfully bridged digital and physical spaces, positioning DTAC as more than a telecom provider. By systematizing numerological practices within a customer-centric platform, DTAC cultivated lasting emotional connections and enhanced its cultural resonance (The Nation, 2020).

Taken together, these cases illustrate the versatility of Muketing as both a symbolic and strategic practice. Whether through ritualized product symbolism, immersive spatial rebranding, or data-driven personalization, successful campaigns align marketing with deeply held cultural and spiritual traditions. In doing so, they transform consumer goods and services into meaningful cultural artifacts that reinforce emotional bonds, strengthen trust, and embed brands within the fabric of everyday ritual life.

3 Materials and methods

This study employed a qualitative approach to collect in-depth insights from Thai e-commerce consumers regarding their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward Muketing. The data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, designed to allow participants to express their views freely while ensuring consistency across key themes relevant to the research objectives.

3.1 Survey design and instrument validation

Given the exploratory nature of this research, a semi-structured interview guide was developed as the primary data collection instrument to investigate Thai consumers' perceptions, experiences, and behavioral responses toward Muketing in e-commerce. The guide was carefully designed to capture the nuanced interplay between spiritual beliefs and digital consumer behavior, focusing on four key dimensions: attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing decisions. The instrument included open-ended questions across six thematic sections: consumer profile, awareness and perceptions of Muketing, experience and influence, emotional and cultural relevance, critical views and concerns, and closing reflections. To ensure validity, the study employed qualitative methods designed to capture participants' authentic experiences, rather than relying on pre-existing scales or numeric measures. Interview questions were initially developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature on Muketing and digital consumer behavior and were evaluated by experts for clarity, cultural

relevance, and alignment with research objectives. A pilot test with two participants provided practical feedback: one participant noted that the term "spiritual symbolism in product marketing" was unclear, while another found questions about "digital engagement behaviors" too broad. Additionally, the sequence of questions sometimes disrupted the natural flow of participants' narratives. In response, the interview guide was revised to clarify terminology, rephrase ambiguous questions into contextually meaningful language, and reorder questions to facilitate a more conversational flow. Data were then systematically analyzed using content analysis, allowing themes and categories to emerge directly from participants' responses rather than being imposed by the researchers. This iterative process of expert review, pilot testing, and guided refinement enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

3.2 Sample selection

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants who could provide rich, experience-based insights into the influence of Muketing on digital consumer behavior. Participants were chosen based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) aged between 18 and 45 years; (b) Thai nationals actively engaged in online shopping via platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop, or Facebook Marketplace; and (c) familiar with or having previously encountered Mutelu-inspired marketing or spiritually themed promotions online. A total of 12 participants were interviewed, which allowed for a manageable yet diverse range of perspectives while ensuring data saturation. This aligns with qualitative research guidelines indicating that saturation is typically achieved within 9–17 interviews (Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study's participants, along with their most frequently used e-commerce platforms and the corresponding dates and times of their interviews.

As presented in Table 1, the sample includes a balanced mix of gender (6 males and 6 females) and a diverse range of ages, spanning from 19 to 41 years old. Participants held various

TABLE 1 Respondents' demographic information and interview dates and times.

No.	Gender	Age	Occupation	Most frequently used e-commerce platform	Date and time of interview
R1	Male	26	Private sector employee	TikTok shop	May 8, 2025 at 09:30 a.m.
R2	Male	32	Freelancer	Shopee	May 8, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.
R3	Male	41	Private sector employee	Facebook Marketplace	May 8, 2025 at 01:00 p.m.
R4	Male	25	Salespersons	Lazada	May 14, 2025 at 09:00 a.m.
R5	Male	33	Salespersons	Lazada	May 14, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.
R6	Male	19	University student	TikTok shop	May 14, 2025 at 01:00 p.m.
R7	Female	22	Private sector employee	Lazada	May 19, 2025 at 09:00 a.m.
R8	Female	24	Private sector employee	Shopee	May 19, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.
R9	Female	19	University student	TikTok shop	May 19, 2025 at 01:30 p.m.
R10	Female	30	Private sector employee	Facebook marketplace	May 26, 2025 at 09:00 a.m.
R11	Female	36	Salespersons	Lazada	May 26, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.
R12	Female	29	Freelancer	TikTok shop	May 26, 2025 at 01:00 p.m.

occupations, including private sector employees, salespersons, freelancers, and university students—professions commonly exposed to or influenced by digital marketing in their daily routines. Regarding platform usage, respondents reported using TikTok Shop, Lazada, Shopee, and Facebook Marketplace, reflecting the popularity of these platforms within Thailand's evolving e-commerce landscape. Interviews were conducted between May 8 and May 26, 2025, with all sessions scheduled at convenient times to accommodate participant availability. This diversity in demographic profiles and platform preferences ensured the collection of rich, experience-based insights into consumer behavior related to Muketing practices in the digital marketplace.

3.3 Data collection

Data collection was conducted in May 2025, over a four-week period using semi-structured, in-depth interviews designed to capture the complexities of how Muketing shapes consumer attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior. Interviews were carried out in Thai, either face-to-face or via secure online platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, depending on participant preference and logistical considerations. Each session lasted between 30 and 45 min.

This study was conducted in accordance with national and institutional ethical standards governing research in the social sciences. All participants were provided with clear information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Only individuals aged 18 years or older were included, and all participation was entirely voluntary. The research was non-medical in nature, posed no physical or psychological risk, and did not involve vulnerable populations. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly upheld; no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were pseudonymized or reported in aggregate to prevent identification. Based on the nature of the research and in accordance with the criteria outlined by Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI) No. 3(3), ethics approval may be waived for studies involving human participants in the behavioral and social sciences when they do not affect the body, mind, cells, genetic materials, or behavior, and when data are collected anonymously, such as through interviews or questionnaires where participants cannot be identified directly or indirectly (Phuangsuwan et al., 2024). In adherence to these criteria, this study qualifies for ethical exemption, yet was conducted with a strong commitment to upholding ethical standards, safeguarding participant rights, and ensuring the integrity of the research process.

3.4 Data analysis

This study employed qualitative content analysis as a systematic yet flexible approach to interpret textual data, enabling both manifest and latent meanings to be synthesized into broader thematic patterns. Transcripts were reviewed iteratively, coded

line by line, and condensed into categories, which were subsequently aggregated into higher-order themes aligned with the research objectives. To enhance rigor, the research team conducted collaborative coding: the primary researcher led the initial coding, while other team members independently coded selected transcripts. Discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached, strengthening inter-coder reliability and incorporating multiple perspectives to reduce interpretive bias. An audit trail—including analytic memos and reflexive notes—was maintained to ensure transparency and traceability of analytic decisions. Data saturation was systematically monitored across twelve interviews; by the tenth interview, no new codes emerged, and the final two interviews confirmed existing categories. This approach enabled the systematic organization of complex, narrative-rich data while capturing the nuanced ways in which Thai consumers engage with Muketing in digital marketplaces. It allowed the researchers to uncover underlying cognitive and affective processes driving consumer attitudes, trust formation, and purchase behaviors, while ensuring methodological rigor and enhancing the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the findings.

4 Results

The findings from the qualitative interviews reveal how Muketing significantly shapes consumer behavior in Thailand's e-commerce landscape. The analysis highlights four key areas of influence: consumer attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior—each connected to online shopping experiences and digital marketing environments.

4.1 Muketing's influence on consumer attitudes in e-commerce

Muketing fosters positive consumer attitudes toward online products and brands by embedding spiritual and cultural significance into digital marketing. Participants reported that encountering spiritually themed messages—such as auspicious product names, lucky colors, or numerology-based branding—on platforms like Shopee, TikTok Shop, or Lazada made them feel more confident and emotionally connected to the product. These symbolic cues influenced how consumers perceived value, with many noting they were more inclined to explore or consider products that conveyed messages of good fortune or protection.

“Honestly, I feel more drawn to them. If a product says it brings wealth or protection, I pay more attention. Even if I didn't plan to buy, I'll click just to see more.” (R2, Personal communication).

“It's the emotional feeling. Like, if the product name includes the word “blessing” or uses a lucky color like gold or red, I just feel it's more meaningful. It's not just another item—it feels like it can bring something good into my life.” (R3, Personal communication).

“If I feel a positive energy from the product, like it aligns with my beliefs, I’m more open to it—even if it’s a bit more expensive.” (R8, Personal communication).

“Mostly TikTok Shop. Some sellers really know how to present things. They use the right words, colors, even the timing when they post. It just gives a better vibe overall.” (R12, Personal communication).

As a result, Muketing enhances emotional receptiveness and cultural familiarity within the e-commerce environment, shifting online browsing behavior from mere price comparison to meaning-driven engagement.

4.2 Muketing’s influence on trust in e-commerce platforms and sellers

In the digital marketplace, where physical product inspection is impossible, trust becomes a crucial factor. Muketing contributes to trust formation when online sellers demonstrate cultural authenticity—for example, by including videos of blessing rituals, photos with monks, or testimonials from spiritual influencers. Participants expressed greater trust in products that were advertised with such rituals or symbolic elements, particularly when sellers explained the spiritual context clearly and sincerely. Conversely, when consumers encountered Muketing that appeared superficial or insincere, they questioned the credibility of both the seller and the platform.

“For me, trust is a big deal because I can’t physically see or touch the products. I rely a lot on how sellers present themselves and their products. If I see videos or photos showing cultural rituals or blessings related to the product, it feels more genuine and trustworthy.” (R1, Personal communication).

“Once, I saw a seller who included a video of a monk blessing the product before shipping. They also had testimonials from spiritual influencers explaining the significance. It made me feel the product was respected and cared for, not just sold for profit.” (R4, Personal communication).

“I think if the seller respects cultural traditions, they probably respect customers too. And if this happens on a platform where many sellers do this authentically, it raises my trust in the whole platform. Some sellers use cultural symbols just to attract attention but don’t explain their meaning or context. It feels fake, like they are just copying others without real respect. That made me doubt their products and even the platform for allowing it.” (R7, Personal communication).

“Absolutely. Secure transactions matter, but cultural integrity matters too. When sellers show they genuinely care about the spiritual or cultural aspect, I feel more confident buying from them.” (R8, Personal communication).

“Muketing bridges the gap between online shopping and real-world cultural values. When done sincerely, it builds trust not

just in the product, but also in the people behind it and the platform hosting the sale. It’s a unique way to connect emotionally with consumers. If platforms encourage authentic Muketing, it can improve trust and loyalty significantly.” (R10, Personal communication).

This indicates that in e-commerce, trust is not only about transaction security but also about perceived cultural integrity.

4.3 Muketing’s influence on consumer engagement with e-commerce content

Muketing significantly increases engagement with digital content across e-commerce platforms. Respondents reported being highly attracted to spiritually themed livestreams, such as flash sales conducted during astrologically favorable hours or influencers unboxing “blessed” products. Platforms like TikTok Shop and Facebook Marketplace were mentioned as particularly effective in delivering immersive Muketing experiences. Interactive elements—such as horoscope-based product filters, comment sections for sharing personal beliefs, or limited-time rituals—prompted users to spend more time browsing and interacting with content.

“I find it really engaging. For example, livestreams during certain lucky hours grab my attention more than regular sales. It feels like there’s an added energy or meaning to the event. TikTok Shop is a good example. I watched an influencer unbox a product that was “blessed” by a monk. It wasn’t just about the product—it felt like a special experience, and I stayed watching longer than usual.” (R3, Personal communication).

“I like how some platforms, like Lazada, let you filter products by horoscope signs or auspicious dates. Also, comment sections where people share their spiritual stories make me want to join the conversation. It feels more like a community than just shopping.” (R5, Personal communication).

“Definitely. I spend more time browsing when there are rituals or limited-time spiritual activities happening. It’s fun and connects me to others with similar beliefs.” (R7, Personal communication).

“Muketing encourages more than just buying—it creates a sense of community. It’s like being part of a group that shares values and interests. That’s a powerful way to keep people coming back and feeling engaged.” (R11, Personal communication).

These activities extended beyond transactional behavior, fostering community-like engagement driven by shared spiritual interest.

4.4 Muketing’s influence on purchasing behavior in e-commerce

Muketing plays a decisive role in driving online purchase decisions. Many participants described buying products not only for their functional use but also for their spiritual promise—such as “career-enhancing amulets” or “lucky charm cosmetics.” Product

descriptions that highlighted spiritual benefits increased urgency and desirability, especially when paired with platform-exclusive deals or time-sensitive offers. In some cases, consumers postponed or timed their purchases to align with lucky days, as suggested by spiritual influencers or online sellers. Moreover, features like “blessed bundles” or zodiac-specific promotions led to repeat purchases and increased average order value.

“Sometimes I buy products not just because they’re useful, but because they have spiritual meaning. For example, I once bought an amulet that was said to help with career success. That spiritual promise was a big factor. I think having an amulet will help me pass the exam.” (R6, Personal communication).

“When sellers highlight things like “lucky charm cosmetics” or “blessed items,” it makes the products feel more desirable. If there’s also a special deal or a limited-time offer, I feel more urgency to buy.” (R8, Personal communication).

“Some sellers or spiritual influencers suggest buying on certain dates that are considered lucky. I’ve delayed purchases to match those days because I believe it might bring better results.” (R9, Personal communication).

“I’ve bought bundles that come with blessings or promotions tied to my zodiac sign. It made me more likely to buy again from the same seller and even increased how much I spent.” (R10, Personal communication).

“Muketing changes how I view shopping online. It makes online shopping feel personal and spiritually connected, not just transactional.” (R12, Personal communication).

This demonstrates that Muketing transforms e-commerce from a utility-based transaction into a belief-driven shopping ritual.

5 Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the view that Muketing—the integration of *Mutelu* spirituality with digital marketing—has become a distinctive and culturally resonant strategy within Thailand’s e-commerce landscape. By incorporating symbols of luck, sacred rituals, and astrology into marketing content, Muketing effectively influences four critical dimensions of consumer behavior: attitudes, trust, engagement, and purchasing decisions. These findings not only align with but also extend prior research on cultural marketing, digital consumerism, and faith-based commerce.

First, the study highlights how Muketing cultivates positive consumer attitudes by embedding spiritual significance into online products and branding. Participants reported stronger emotional connections and increased attention to products with auspicious names, lucky colors, or sacred affiliations. This aligns with [Srimeethum and Setthajit \(2023\)](#), who observed that spiritual messaging in Thai digital media enhances consumer receptiveness by appealing to cultural familiarity and psychological comfort. Similarly, [Phatwang and Chumkate \(2023\)](#) found that Thai Gen Y consumers often associate faith-based product features with enhanced perceived value

and emotional satisfaction, especially in high-context, belief-driven environments like online marketplaces.

Regarding trust, the study reveals that Muketing strategies rooted in authenticity—such as the inclusion of blessing rituals, endorsements by spiritual influencers, and symbolic packaging—serve as cultural proxies for product credibility and seller integrity. This complements the work of [Soleimani \(2022\)](#) and [Salari \(2024\)](#), who argued that trust in e-commerce increasingly depends on non-technical signals like transparency, narrative consistency, and perceived ethical conduct. In the Thai context, these signals are often spiritual in nature. When sellers demonstrate respect for cultural rituals, consumers infer a broader sense of moral reliability and care, which aligns with [Hanphichai’s \(2025\)](#) view that *Mutelu* practices not only meet spiritual needs but also offer psychosocial assurance during moments of uncertainty.

The study also illustrates that Muketing enhances consumer engagement through interactive, ritual-oriented content, particularly on platforms like TikTok Shop. Participants described greater enjoyment and prolonged browsing during astrologically timed livestreams or spiritually themed flash sales. These findings reflect earlier research by [Busalim and Asadi \(2025\)](#) and [Ramos and Ramos \(2025\)](#), who emphasized the role of interactive content in stimulating engagement and fostering a sense of belonging in social commerce ecosystems. Moreover, the communal dimension of Muketing—where users share spiritual stories and participate in rituals—transforms digital shopping into a culturally meaningful social activity, echoing [Srimeethum et al. \(2025\)](#), who demonstrated that Muketing can foster collective identity and consumer loyalty.

Perhaps most significantly, the study confirms that Muketing actively drives purchasing behavior. Participants cited spiritual beliefs as motivating factors in their buying decisions, often prioritizing auspicious products, engaging in repeat purchases, or timing transactions based on lucky dates. This finding extends the conclusions of [Tansiri \(2024\)](#) and [Thongpradap et al. \(2025\)](#), who found that spiritually branded products lead to increased sales volumes and repeat transactions, especially when paired with limited-time offers or influencer promotions. The ritualistic framing of online shopping, as seen in bundled “blessed” items or horoscope-aligned promotions, transforms e-commerce from a utilitarian activity into a form of spiritual practice—what [Malasri and Metharom \(2023\)](#) described as “faith-driven consumption behavior.”

Collectively, these insights point to Muketing as a strategically adaptive and culturally embedded marketing model that aligns with the evolving expectations of Thai consumers in a digitized economy. While global e-commerce emphasizes personalization and convenience, Muketing adds a layer of cultural meaning and emotional resonance that enhances perceived product value and long-term brand loyalty. This supports the broader theoretical assertion made by [Rakhval-Müller and Fedotova \(2024\)](#), who argue that adaptive marketing strategies must incorporate local cultural frameworks to remain effective in global markets.

While the findings demonstrate Muketing’s capacity to enhance consumer attitudes, trust, and engagement, they also reveal important limitations. Several participants expressed skepticism when spiritual elements were perceived as superficial or insincere. For example, when sellers employed auspicious symbols without explanation or cultural grounding, respondents described the practice as “fake” or merely imitative, which undermined their

confidence in both the seller and the platform. This suggests that Muketing's effectiveness is contingent not only on the use of spiritual motifs but also on the authenticity with which they are presented.

These reactions highlight a broader ethical concern: the potential commodification of sacred traditions. Prior research cautions that marketing which trivializes or exploits spiritual symbols risks alienating belief-driven consumers and damaging long-term brand credibility (Oğuz, 2025; Srimeethum and Setthajit, 2023). Inauthentic Muketing may therefore generate discomfort rather than resonance, prompting consumers to question the intentions of businesses and the integrity of e-commerce environments. This aligns with Soleimani (2022), who emphasized that consumer mistrust in online platforms often arises from perceived inconsistencies and lack of credibility in sellers' narratives.

The increasing prevalence of Muketing also raises ethical concerns. Several participants expressed discomfort with inauthentic or exploitative use of spiritual themes, indicating that Muketing's effectiveness is contingent on cultural sincerity. As Srimeethum and Setthajit (2023), Thongpradap et al. (2025), and Oğuz (2025) emphasize, ethical marketing in belief-based contexts must avoid commodification of sacred elements or misrepresentation of spiritual values. Brands must engage with *Mutelu* not as a mere aesthetic or promotional tool, but as a living belief system with profound personal significance for many consumers.

Moreover, insincere practices carry reputational risks amplified by digital platforms. Negative word-of-mouth, especially in highly networked environments, can rapidly erode consumer trust and loyalty. Velnadar et al. (2024) demonstrated that negative e-WOM significantly influences consumer behavior and can outweigh the effects of positive messaging, making inauthentic Muketing a potential liability. In an era where consumer skepticism spreads quickly through social media, perceived cultural exploitation could provoke backlash, diminishing trust not only in individual sellers but also in the platforms that host such content.

To mitigate these risks, brands must approach Muketing with transparency, cultural sensitivity, and respect for the underlying belief systems. Rather than relying on symbolic decoration, effective strategies should communicate genuine alignment with consumers' values and provide clear contextual meaning. Establishing this sincerity is not only ethically responsible but also critical to sustaining trust and preventing consumer skepticism in Thailand's rapidly evolving faith economy.

6 Conclusion

This study explored the phenomenon of Muketing and its impact on consumer behavior within Thailand's e-commerce sector. Based on qualitative data from interviews with Thai online shoppers, the findings revealed that Muketing shapes consumer attitudes, enhances trust in sellers and platforms, fosters engagement through culturally resonant content, and influences purchase decisions grounded in spiritual symbolism and emotional significance. These results highlighted the enduring role of traditional beliefs in shaping contemporary consumption behavior, particularly in digital environments where consumers seek not only transactional value but also connection, meaning, and reassurance.

The study concluded that Muketing is present and appears to influence purchasing behavior within the study's sample. It emerges as an adaptive strategy that integrates local belief systems with modern marketing practices, offering businesses an innovative means to strengthen emotional bonds with consumers in culturally sensitive markets. The findings further suggested that spiritual branding extends beyond symbolic representation, potentially driving tangible commercial outcomes when applied with authenticity and ethical consideration. Future research should investigate the underlying mechanisms of Muketing and assess its broader applicability across different contexts and consumer segments.

6.1 Theoretical contributions

This study makes contributions to the literature on digital consumer behavior, cultural marketing, and belief-driven consumption. It adds to research on digital consumer behavior, cultural marketing, and belief-driven consumption. It introduces Muketing as an example of how local spiritual practices, like *Mutelu*, can be integrated into e-commerce to build strong connections between consumers and brands. It shows that cultural signals—such as rituals, symbolic product design, and spiritual stories—help create trust online alongside usual security measures. The study also highlights that beliefs and rituals can influence buying decisions, showing that emotions and symbolism matter, not just practical reasons. Focusing on Thailand, the research provides culturally specific insights and a basis for studying similar marketing strategies in other Southeast Asian countries and emerging digital markets.

6.2 Practical implications

This research offers practical insights for marketers, e-commerce platforms, and entrepreneurs working in culturally diverse markets. Businesses can make products more appealing by including spiritual symbols, auspicious colors, and stories of luck and protection in their branding and content. Authenticity is key: consumers can tell if cultural references are sincere, and superficial use of spiritual motifs can harm trust and reputation. Effective Muketing requires both cultural awareness and genuine respect for the beliefs behind the practices. E-commerce platforms can also engage users through features like astrologically timed sales, spiritually themed livestreams, or ritual-based product bundles, helping build a sense of community among like-minded consumers. Ethically, marketers must avoid exploiting cultural beliefs and present such content transparently and responsibly. As spiritual content becomes more common in digital commerce, industry stakeholders and regulators may need to develop guidelines to protect consumers and preserve cultural integrity.

6.3 Limitations and future research

While this study offers important insights into the role of Muketing in shaping consumer behavior within Thailand's

e-commerce sector, several limitations should be acknowledged. The qualitative design relied on a purposively selected sample of twelve participants aged between 18 and 45. Although data saturation was achieved and participants represented diverse perspectives, the limited scale restricts the generalizability of findings to the wider population of Thai online consumers. Larger-scale quantitative or mixed-method approaches would enhance statistical validity and allow for broader demographic comparisons. In addition, the study focused on consumers already familiar with Mutelu-inspired marketing, thereby excluding neutral or skeptical perspectives and narrowing the diversity of attitudes captured. The analysis also underexplored the cultural, psychological, and ritual dimensions underpinning engagement with Muketing, highlighting the need for deeper theoretical integration of belief, ritual, and magical thinking frameworks to explain how Mutelu influences decision-making, agency, and coping strategies in uncertain contexts.

The cultural specificity of the study further limits the transferability of its findings. While the Thai context enriches the analysis, comparative studies across Southeast Asia—such as in Indonesia, Laos, or the Philippines—would help distinguish universal features of belief-driven marketing from context-specific practices. As digital technologies advance, future research should also examine how innovations such as AI personalization, virtual and augmented reality rituals, or AI-generated horoscopes may reshape Muketing and influence consumer trust in faith-based commerce. Longitudinal designs would provide valuable insights into the sustainability and long-term impacts of such strategies. Addressing these avenues would extend the current findings and advance theoretical and practical understanding of how cultural traditions, technological innovation, and consumer behavior intersect in the digital economy.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

This study was conducted in accordance with national and institutional ethical standards governing research in the social sciences. All participants were provided with clear information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Only individuals aged 18 years or older were included, and all participation was entirely voluntary.

References

- Ajanapanya, N. (2024). Faith, fortune, and fate: Thailand's booming 'Mutelu' economy. *The Nation Thailand*. Available online at: <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/policy/40041073>
- Akour, I., Alnazzawi, N., Alshurideh, M., Almaiah, M. A., Al Kurdi, B., Alfaisal, R. M., et al. (2022). A conceptual model for investigating the effect of privacy concerns on

Author contributions

PL: Resources, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Visualization, Validation, Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Formal analysis, Software, Data curation. YS: Data curation, Project administration, Validation, Writing – original draft, Funding acquisition, Software, Formal analysis, Resources. TK: Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Funding acquisition. SA: Software, Resources, Validation, Writing – original draft, Funding acquisition. RN: Funding acquisition, Writing – original draft, Resources, Validation, Data curation, Software.

Funding

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research and/or publication of this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The authors declare that Gen AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized the GPT-4o model to assist with language refinement and optimization of select sections. All content was subsequently reviewed and revised by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the final version of this publication.

Any alternative text (alt text) provided alongside figures in this article has been generated by Frontiers with the support of artificial intelligence and reasonable efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, including review by the authors wherever possible. If you identify any issues, please contact us.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

e-commerce adoption: a study on United Arab Emirates consumers. *Electronics* 11:3648. doi: 10.3390/electronics11223648

Amornkitvikai, Y., Tham, S. Y., Harvie, C., and Buachoom, W. W. (2022). Barriers and factors affecting the e-commerce sustainability of Thai micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). *Sustainability* 14:8476. doi: 10.3390/su14148476

- Analytics and Intelligence Research. (2025). Muteluh: faith in the market place. Krungsri Research. Available online at: <https://www.krungsri.com/en/research/research-intelligence/Muteluh-2024>
- Asdecker, B. (2021). Building the e-commerce supply chain of the future: what influences consumer acceptance of alternative places of delivery on the last-mile. *Logistics* 5:90. doi: 10.3390/logistics5040090
- Binlibdah, S. (2024). Investigating the role of artificial intelligence to measure consumer efficiency: the use of strategic communication and personalized media content. *Journal. Media* 5, 1142–1161. doi: 10.3390/journalmedia5030073
- Busalim, A., and Asadi, S. (2025). What drives customers to engage with social commerce: a systematic review and factor derivation approach. *Inf. Syst. E-Bus. Manage.*, 1–27. doi: 10.1007/s10257-025-00700-x
- Cheng, Y., Xie, B., and An, K. (2023). Analysis of omni-channel evolution game strategy for e-commerce enterprises in the context of online and offline integration. *Systems* 11:321. doi: 10.3390/systems11070321
- Cheung, M. F., and To, W. M. (2021). The effect of consumer perceptions of the ethics of retailers on purchase behavior and word-of-mouth: the moderating role of ethical beliefs. *J. Bus. Ethics* 171, 771–788. doi: 10.1007/s10551-020-04431-6
- Chowdhury, A. (2024). Muketing strategy: the hottest belief-based trend right now. Primal. Available online at: <https://www.primal.co.th/marketing/what-is-muketing-strategy/>
- Createx House. (n.d.). Pink lady apples Thailand: Double dragons bringing good news. Ads of the World by the Clios. Available online at: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/double-dragons-bringing-good-news>
- Faccia, A., Le Roux, C. L., and Pandey, V. (2023). Innovation and e-commerce models, the technology catalysts for sustainable development: the emirate of Dubai case study. *Sustainability* 15:3419. doi: 10.3390/su15043419
- Farhat, R., Yang, Q., Ahmed, M. A. O., and Hasan, G. (2025). E-commerce for a sustainable future: integrating trust, product quality perception, and online-shopping satisfaction. *Sustainability* 17:1431. doi: 10.3390/su17041431
- Gupta, S., Kushwaha, P. S., Badhera, U., Chatterjee, P., and Gonzalez, E. D. S. (2023). Identification of benefits, challenges, and pathways in e-commerce industries: an integrated two-phase decision-making model. *Sustain. Oper. Comput.* 4, 200–218. doi: 10.1016/j.susoc.2023.08.005
- Handoyo, S. (2024). Purchasing in the digital age: a meta-analytical perspective on trust, risk, security, and e-WOM in e-commerce. *Heliyon* 10:e29714. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29714
- Hanphichai, S. (2025). Mutelu economics belief-based business and value creation for the Thai economy. *J. Adm. Manag. Sust. Dev.*, 3, 1–14. Available online at: <https://so15.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jamsd/article/view/1446>
- Hennink, M., and Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: a systematic review of empirical tests. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 292:114523. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523
- Herzallah, D., Liébana-Cabanillas, F., Muñoz-Leiva, F., and Zarco, C. (2025). Past, present, and future of social commerce: a bibliometric analysis. *Qual. Quant.* 59, 3079–3111. doi: 10.1007/s11135-025-02103-z
- Hopali, E., Vayvay, Ö., Kalender, Z. T., Turhan, D., and Aysuna, C. (2022). How do mobile wallets improve sustainability in payment services? A comprehensive literature review. *Sustainability* 14:16541. doi: 10.3390/su142416541
- Hua, N., Hight, S., Wei, W., Ozturk, A. B., Zhao, X. R., Nusair, K., et al. (2019). The power of e-commerce: does e-commerce enhance the impact of loyalty programs on hotel operating performance? *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* 31, 1906–1923. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-02-2018-0168
- Iyengar, R., Park, Y.-H., and Yu, Q. (2022). The impact of subscription programs on customer purchases. *J. Mark. Res.* 59, 1101–1119. doi: 10.1177/0022437221080163
- James, Y. S., Handelman, J. M., and Taylor, S. F. (2011). Magical thinking and consumer coping. *J. Consum. Res.* 38, 632–649. doi: 10.1086/660163
- Kartomo, T. (2024). The role of social media in building consumer trust in product. *Kompertemen: Kumpulan Orientalasi Pasar Konsumen* 2, 8–17. doi: 10.56457/kompertemen.v2i2.641
- Kennedy, S. I., Marjerison, R. K., Yu, Y., Zi, Q., Tang, X., and Yang, Z. (2022). E-commerce engagement: a prerequisite for economic sustainability—an empirical examination of influencing factors. *Sustainability* 14:4554. doi: 10.3390/su14084554
- Kusi, G. A., Rumki, M. Z. A., Quarcoo, F. H., Otchere, E., and Fu, G. (2022). The role of information overload on consumers' online shopping behavior. *J. Bus. Manag. Stud.* 4, 162–178. doi: 10.32996/jbms.2022.4.4.16
- Li, L., and Li, J.-Y. (2024). Corporate social responsibility and society 5.0: assessing consumer awareness, loyalty, and trust toward socially responsible organizations. *Sustainability* 16:7862. doi: 10.3390/su16177862
- Li, Z., Wang, Y., Cianfrone, B. A., Guo, Z., Liu, B., Zhang, J., et al. (2025). Impact of scene features of e-commerce live streaming on consumers' flow and purchase intentions of sporting goods. *Behav. Sci.* 15:238. doi: 10.3390/bs15020238
- Lim, X. J., Cheah, J. H., Ngo, L. V., Chan, K., and Ting, H. (2023). How do crazy rich Asians perceive sustainable luxury? Investigating the determinants of consumers' willingness to pay a premium price. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* 75:103502. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103502
- Lopes, J. M., Gomes, S., Lopes, P., Silva, A., Lourenço, D., Esteves, D., et al. (2023). Exploring the role of gamification in the online shopping experience in retail stores: an exploratory study. *Soc. Sci.* 12:235. doi: 10.3390/socsci12040235
- Malasri, J., and Metharom, P. (2023). The comparative study of attitudes, social norms, and purchasing decision of consumers with backgrounds in science and social science towards electric Mutelu products. *J. Manag. Sci.*, 12, 73–96. Available online at: https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jms_ubu/article/view/267960
- Mayayise, T. O. (2024). Investigating factors influencing trust in C2C e-commerce environments: a systematic literature review. *Data Inf. Manag.* 8:100056. doi: 10.1016/j.dim.2023.100056
- Migkos, S. P., Giannakopoulos, N. T., and Sakas, D. P. (2025). Impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior and online shopping preferences. *J. Theor. Appl. Electron. Commer. Res.* 20:111. doi: 10.3390/jtaer20020111
- Morić, Z., Dakic, V., Djekic, D., and Regvart, D. (2024). Protection of personal data in the context of e-commerce. *J. Cybersecur. Priv.* 4, 731–761. doi: 10.3390/jcp4030034
- Muhammad, T., and Stukalina, Y. (2024). Real-time customer communication in e-commerce: improving customer experience, satisfaction and loyalty. In New trends in contemporary economics, business and management. Selected proceedings of the 14th International Scientific Conference “Business and Management 2024” pp. 270–276.
- Napawut, W., Siripipattanakul, S., Phayaphrom, B., Siripipattanakul, S., and Limna, P. (2022). The mediating effect of E-WOM on the relationship between digital marketing activities and intention to buy via Shopee. *Int. J. Behav. Anal.*, 2, 1–13. Available online at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359023954>
- Oğuz, A. (2025). E-commerce from an ethical perspective. *Dumlupınar Üniv. Sos. Bilim. Derg.* 84, 352–364. doi: 10.51290/dpusbe.1631445
- Otarinia, M. A. (2024). The impact of e-commerce and foreign investment on economic growth in developing countries. *Creat. Econ. New Bus. Manag. Approaches*, 2, 18–59. Available online at: <https://bmjournal.ir/index.php/bm/article/view/49>
- Phatwang, O., and Chumkate, J. (2023). Attitudes and experiences of generation Y consumers in Bangkok affecting faith-based product and service purchases through online channel. *J. Polit. Adm. Law*, 15, 228–243. Available online at: <http://ithesis-ir.su.ac.th/dspace/handle/123456789/5061>
- Phriwanrat, K. (2023). Amulets: Thai's beliefs and faiths toward the new creation of the contemporary culture design (Doctor of Philosophy, Silpakorn University, Thailand). Available online at: <http://ithesis-ir.su.ac.th/dspace/handle/123456789/5061> (Accessed May 31, 2025).
- Phuangsuwan, P., Limna, P., and Siripipattanakul, S. (2024). Ethics in the social sciences research. *Adv. Knowl. Executives*, 3, 1–11. Available online at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394223864>
- Raji, M. A., Olodo, H. B., Oke, T. T., Addy, W. A., Ofodile, O. C., and Oyewole, A. T. (2024). E-commerce and consumer behavior: a review of AI-powered personalization and market trends. *GSC Adv. Res. Rev.* 18, 66–77. doi: 10.30574/gscarr.2024.18.3.0090
- Rakhval-Müller, A., and Fedotova, I. V. (2024). The influence of cultural factors on consumer behavior: a holistic model of adaptive marketing approaches. *Econ. Transp. Complex* 44, 165–185. doi: 10.30977/ETK.2225-2304.2024.44.165
- Ramos, E. C., and Ramos, C. M. Q. (2025). User-generated content and its impact on purchase intent for tourism products: a comparative analysis of millennials and centennials on TikTok. *Future Internet* 17:105. doi: 10.3390/fi17030105
- Rosário, A. T., Cruz, R. N., and Moniz, L. B. (Eds.) (2024). Data-driven marketing for strategic success. Hershey, PA: IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Rowi, A. S., Wahyudi, M. A., Oswari, T., and Purwoko, B. (2024). The role of digital marketing strategies in enhancing customer engagement and brand loyalty: a study of e-commerce platforms. *Int. J. Bus. Law Educ.* 5, 2778–2788. doi: 10.56442/ijble.v5i2.936
- Salari, M. M. (2024). Investigating the factors affecting customer trust in e-commerce. *Int. J. Manag. Account.* 6, 118–126. doi: 10.34104/ijma.024.01180126
- Siangchokyo, N., Leecharoen, B., and Sangthong, T. (2025). Unlocking sustainable e-commerce success in Thailand: a holistic model of digital culture, innovation, and technology adoption. *Asian Interdiscip. Sustain. Rev.* 14, 1–11. doi: 10.14456/aisr.2025.9
- Silva, D. (2025). “E-commerce and the evolution of consumer behavior” in *Evolving strategies for organizational management and performance evaluation*. eds. R. Marcão and V. Santos. (Hershey, PA: IGI Global Scientific Publishing), 133–154.
- Soleimani, M. (2022). Buyers' trust and mistrust in e-commerce platforms: a synthesizing literature review. *Inf. Syst. E-Bus. Manage.* 20, 57–78. doi: 10.1007/s10257-021-00545-0
- Srimeethun, S., and Sethajit, R. (2023). Marketing communication strategies with Mutelu beliefs in the digital age. *J. Innov. Media Commun.* 2, 41–59. doi: 10.60101/jimc2023.705
- Srimeethun, S., Sethajit, R., and Pattayanon, P. (2025). Integrated marketing communication and spiritual marketing communication and their impact on the purchasing behavior of generation Y consumers regarding beliefs in Lord Ganesha. *J. Commun. Manag. NIDA*, 11, 1–20. Available online at: <https://so12.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jcmn/article/view/1601>
- Srivastava, S., and Sinha, S. (2024). Review of price sensitivity on advertising of cosmetics products in e-commerce sector. In 2024 1st international conference on

sustainable computing and integrated communication in changing landscape of AI (ICSCAI) (pp. 1–9). IEEE

Sriwilai, S. (2023). The model causal relationship of logistics service quality influencing customer satisfaction of online shopping e-commerce in Thailand. *Rajapark J.*, 17, 174–191. Available online at: <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/RJPJ/article/view/267228>

Surjono, W. (2024). Factors influencing online shopping decisions in the fashion industry. *Int. J. Manag. Sci. Inf. Technol.* 4, 297–311. doi: 10.35870/ijmsit.v4i2.3004

Tafolli, F., Qema, E., and Hameli, K. (2025). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention through brand image and brand trust in the fashion industry: evidence from a developing country. *Res. J. Text. Appar.* doi: 10.1108/RJTA-07-2024-0131

Tansiri, P. (2024). Marketing mix factors affecting consumer purchasing decision of amulets in Bangkok. *J. Soc. Sci. Humanit. Priv. High. Educ. Inst. Thailand*, 30, 13–26. Available online at: <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/apheit-ss/article/view/273801>

The Nation. (2020). Get lucky with DTAC'S popular 'personalised lucky mobile phone number'. The Nation Thailand. Available online at: <https://www.nationthailand.com/business/30393602>

The Nation. (2024). Gen Z most interested in faith economy: Survey. The Nation Thailand. Available online at: <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/general/40041853>

The Nation. (2025). MK restaurants embrace 'muketing' in auspicious rebranding. The Nation Thailand. Available online at: <https://www.nationthailand.com/business/corporate/40045392>

Thongpradap, K., Supaweera, F., Mongleh, A., and Kongrode, J. (2025). The influence of content marketing and references group on the decision to purchase the Mutelu

jewelry brand Ravipa. *Rajapark J.*, 19, 534–552. Available online at: <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/RJPJ/article/view/276596>

Velndar, R., Kumaravel, S. C., Lathief, J. T. A., Jayacyril, C. M., Rohit, Olson, B. J., et al. (2024). Exploring the influence of positive- and-negative electronic word of mouth on online consumer behaviour and customer loyalty. *FIIB Bus. Rev.* doi: 10.1177/23197145241229915

Wolniak, R., Stecula, K., and Aydın, B. (2024). Digital transformation of grocery in-store shopping-scanners, artificial intelligence, augmented reality and beyond: a review. *Foods* 13:2948. doi: 10.3390/foods13182948

Xia, Z., and Shannon, R. (2025). Navigating the digital frontier: exploring the dynamics of customer-brand relationships through AI chatbots. *Sustainability* 17:2173. doi: 10.3390/su17052173

Yadav, N., Thoke, M., Shrivastav, R., and Prajapati, V. (2024). Consumer behavior in online purchasing. *Int. J. Adv. Multidiscip. Res. Stud.* 4, 1108–1112. doi: 10.62225/2583049x.2024.4.3.2908

Yi, J., and Oh, Y. K. (2022). Does brand type affect what consumers discuss? A comparison of attribute-based reviews of value and premium brands of an innovative product. *Internet Res.* 32, 606–619. doi: 10.1108/INTR-08-2020-0478

Yum, K., and Kim, J. (2024). The influence of perceived value, customer satisfaction, and trust on loyalty in entertainment platforms. *Appl. Sci.* 14:5763. doi: 10.3390/app14135763

Zhang, X., Luo, J., and Liu, X. (2025). Differentiated advertising, heterogeneous consumers and suitable design of platform merchant. *Mathematics* 13:1545. doi: 10.3390/math13101545