The Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Image and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness in the Context of Digital Consumers in Indonesia

(*Dampak Aktivitas Pemasaran Media Sosial terhadap Citra Merek dan Niat Beli: Peran Mediasi Kesadaran Merek dalam Konteks Konsumen Digital di Indonesia*)

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Abstract: Indonesia's digital marketing landscape has evolved rapidly due to the widespread adoption of social media, particularly among younger consumers.

Objective: This study examines the effect of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) on brand image and purchase intention, with brand awareness as a mediating variable.

Methods: Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through a survey of 464 Indonesian social media users with online purchasing experience. The data were analyzed using Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) with LISREL.

Research Results: The results indicate that SMMAs have a significant positive effect on brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intention. Brand awareness also positively influences brand image and purchase intention and fully mediates the relationship between SMMAs and both outcomes. The findings extend the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Hierarchy of Effects Model and offer practical implications for designing engaging and personalized social media marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Activities, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Indonesian Digital Consumers

1. Introduction

The advancement of digital technology and the internet has transformed marketing paradigms globally, and Indonesia is no exception. Internet penetration in Indonesia is remarkably high. According to (APJII 2025), Indonesian internet users reached 229,428,417 individuals from a total population of 284,438,900 in 2025, representing 80.66%. Of this figure, approximately 24.80% of internet time is spent accessing social media, and 14.95% is dedicated to online transactions. This phenomenon indicates that social media has evolved into a vital business ecosystem. Correspondingly, the latest report from (We Are Social 2025) notes that internet users in Indonesia have reached 212 million, dominated by highly active Gen Z and Millennials who consume digital content, including through platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. This trend has given rise to a dynamic digital economy ecosystem where social media functions not only as a communication channel but also as a potential marketplace (social commerce) (Afkar and Yusmaneli 2023). Within this context, Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) encompassing entertainment, customization, and trendiness have become strategic instruments for brands to connect, engage, and ultimately influence consumer behavior (Alalwan et al., 2017; Kim and Ko, 2012).
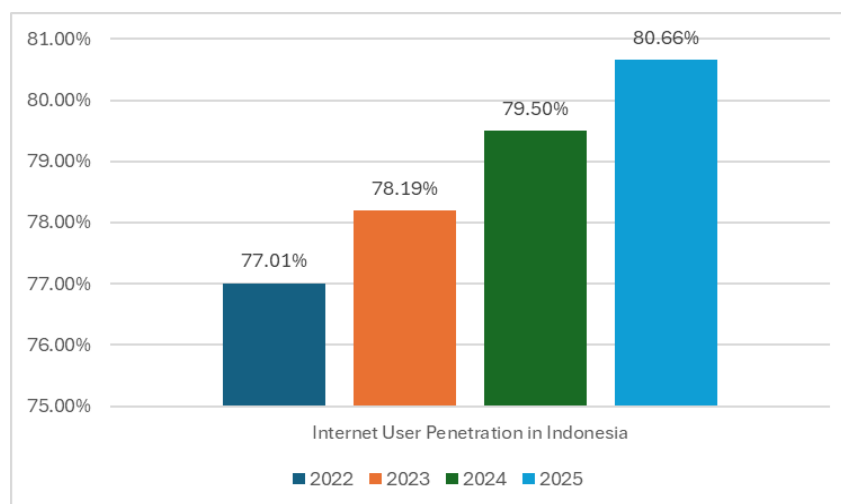

Figure 1. Internet User Penetration in Indonesia (Data Source: APJII (2025))
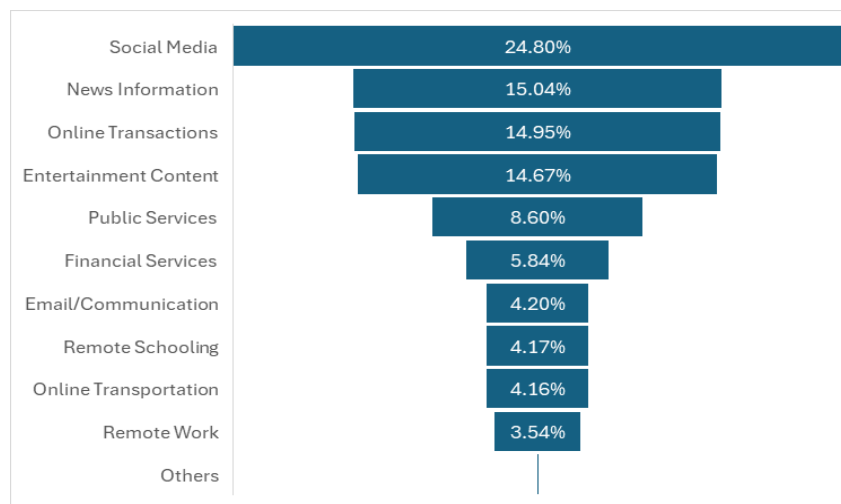
Figure 2. Reasons for Internet Connectivity in Indonesia (Data Source: APJII (2025))

However, amidst this rapid growth, notable literature gaps warrant deeper investigation. First, while numerous studies examine the direct relationship between SMMA and purchase intention or brand equity (Bilgin (2018); Yadav and Rahman (2018)), research integrating the dual role of brand awareness both as a direct outcome of SMMA and as a key mediator for brand image and purchase intention formation remains limited, especially in Indonesia. Second, prior research predominantly utilizes prediction-oriented Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM). Yet, for confirming established theoretical relationships between constructs, Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) using software like LISREL 10.2 is considered more appropriate due to its capacity to test the overall model fit (Hair et al. (2019); (Jöreskog, Olsson, and Wallentin 2016)). Third, few studies present comprehensive goodness-of-fit analysis (including absolute, incremental, and parsimony fit) for such mediation models.

Addressing these gaps, this study has three primary objectives: (1) To analyze the direct effects of SMMA on brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intention; (2) To test the direct effects of brand awareness on brand image and purchase intention; and (3) To analyze the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between SMMA and both brand image and purchase intention.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

This study employs the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; (Ajzen (1991)) and the Hierarchy of Effects Model (HoE; Lavidge and Steiner (1961)) as its theoretical framework to explain the cognitive-affective-conative process of online consumers. TPB posits that an individual's intention to perform a behavior (e.g., purchasing) is influenced by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the SMMA context, social media content and interactions can shape positive attitudes (e.g., through brand image) and subjective norms, which ultimately form purchase intention. The HoE Model delineates consumer response stages from cognitive (thinking) to affective (feeling) to conative (doing). This model aligns with the research flow where SMMA first builds awareness (cognitive), then shapes image (affective), and finally drives purchase intention (conative).

This research offers dual contributions. Theoretically, it enriches digital marketing literature by confirming a sequential chain relationship model (SMMA → Brand Awareness → Brand Image/Purchase Intention) within the unique Indonesian contexta nation characterized by collectivist digital consumers with high social media engagement. Practically, the findings can guide businesses in designing more effective and measurable SMMA strategies to build strong brands amid intense digital market competition.

2.2. Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA)

SMMA is defined as a series of marketing efforts undertaken by a brand on social media platforms to interact with consumers, build relationships, and encourage desired behaviors (Kim and Ko 2012). Based on studies by (Yang et al. 2022) and (Bushara et al. 2023), SMMA is measured through five key dimensions: interaction (the brand's ability to respond and invite discussion), entertainment (enjoyable and amusing content), customization (providing personalized content or offers), trendiness (the ability to follow or create trends), and electronic word-of-mouth

(WOM). These activities not only enhance brand visibility but also create profound consumer experiences (Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger 2020).

2.3. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in a consumer's memory, reflected by their ability to recognize or recall the brand within a product category (Keller 1993). Within the hierarchy of effects, brand awareness constitutes the cognitive foundation that must be established before affective and conative stages. SMMA, with its extensive reach and high frequency, is considered a primary driver of brand awareness in the digital era (Hutter et al. (2013); (Supartiwi, Ariyanti, and Trianasari (2022)).

2.4. Brand Image

Brand image is the consumer's perception of a brand, reflected through associations held in memory (Keller 1993). A strong brand image is built through consistent brand experiences and communication. Brand awareness is a crucial prerequisite for brand image formation, as consumers must first "know" a brand before they can "feel" anything about it (Azzari and Pelissari 2020).

2.5. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as an individual's subjective likelihood of purchasing a specific product or brand (Spears and Singh 2004). It is a direct precursor to actual purchasing behavior and is influenced by various factors, including brand perceptions (image) and brand knowledge (awareness) (Majeed, Owusu-Ansah, and Ashmond (2021); Lima, Cruz, and Pacheco (2024)).

2.6. Hypothesis Development

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

1. H1: Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) positively influence Purchase Intention.

2. H2: Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) positively influence Brand Image.

3. H3: Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) positively influence Brand Awareness.

4. H4: Brand Awareness positively influences Purchase Intention.

5. H5: Brand Awareness positively influences Brand Image.

6. H6: Brand Awareness mediates the positive effect of SMMA on Purchase Intention.

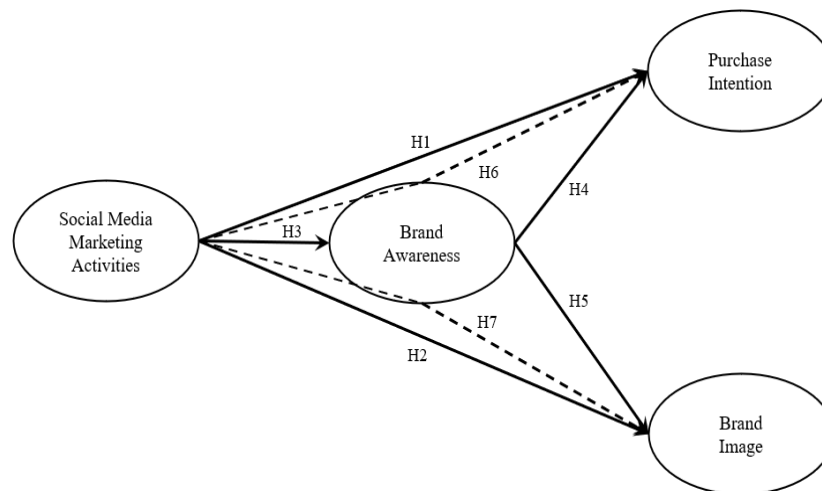7. H7: Brand Awareness mediates the positive effect of SMMA on Brand Image.

Figure 3. Hypothesized Research Model

3.   Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal survey design, chosen to test the cause-and-effect relationships between variables outlined in the hypotheses. The target population comprises Indonesian consumers who actively use social media and have experience with online purchases. Referring to (Krejcie and Morgan 1970) table for an infinite population, the minimum required sample size is 384. Anticipating incomplete responses, questionnaires were distributed more broadly, yielding 464 complete and valid responses for analysis. Non-probability sampling

techniques namely purposive and snowball sampling were used to reach eligible respondents.

Data were collected online via Google Forms from October to November 2025. The questionnaire consisted of five sections: (1) demographic data, (2) SMMA items (6 items, adapted from (Yang et al. 2022), and Bushara et al. (2023)), (3) Brand Awareness items (5 items, adapted from (Yang et al. 2022), (4) Brand Image items (5 items, adapted from Yang et al. (2022)), and (5) Purchase Intention items (5 items, adapted from (Majeed, Owusu-Ansah, and Ashmond 2021), and (Lima, Cruz, and Pacheco 2024)). All items were measured using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree). The 6-point scale was selected based on recommendations by Preston and Colman (2000) to avoid neutral response bias and enhance discriminatory power.

Data analysis was conducted in two stages using LISREL 11.0. The first stage involved measurement model (outer model) analysis via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to evaluate instrument validity and reliability. The second stage entailed structural model (inner model) analysis to test the research hypotheses. The Robust Maximum Likelihood (RML) estimation method was used due to its robustness against violations of multivariate normality. Model goodness-of-fit was evaluated using a range of indices, categorized into Absolute Fit measures (RMSEA, SRMR, GFI, AGFI), Incremental/Comparative Fit measures (CFI, NFI, NNFI, IFI, RFI), and Parsimony Fit measures (PNFI, PGFI, Chi-Square/df).

4. Research Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Respondent profiles exhibited representative diversity. Of the 464 respondents, 54.7% were female and 45.3% male. The largest age group (32.3%) was 21-28 years, followed by 35-44 years (26.1%) and 29-34 years (21.6%). In terms of education, 56.7% held a Bachelor's degree (S1/D4), and 52.6% worked as employees in state-owned or regionally-owned enterprises. Most respondents (30.4%) reported a monthly income between IDR 5,000,000 and 7,499,000. A significant majority of respondents (78.9%) reported using social media more than five times per day and

the most common range for monthly online shopping expenditure was IDR 100,000 to 249,999 (37.1%).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Description		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	210	45.3%
	Female	254	54.7%
Age	< 20 years	28	6.0%
	21 - 28 years	150	32.3%
	29 - 34 years	100	21.6%
	35 - 44 years	121	26.1%
	> 44 years	65	14.0%
Education	High School / Equivalent	92	19.8%
	Diploma	59	12.7%
	Bachelor's Degree	263	56.7%
	Postgraduate	50	10.8%
Occupation	Civil Servant (ASN)	18	3.9%
	State/Regional Enterprise Employee (BUMN/BUMD)	244	52.6%
	Private Sector Employee	90	19.4%
	Entrepreneur	21	4.5%
	Homemaker	14	3.0%
	Student/University Student	63	13.6%
	Other	14	3.0%
Monthly Income (IDR)	< 2,500,000	97	20.9%
	2,500,000 - 4,999,999	90	19.4%
	5,000,000 - 7,499,000	141	30.4%
	7,500,000 - 9,999,000	65	14.0%
	≥ 10,000,000	71	15.3%
Average Frequency of Social Media Usage (per Day)	Not every day (very rarely)	22	4.7%
	Less than 5 times per day	76	16.4%
	5 to 10 times per day	198	42.7%
	10 to 20 times per day	95	20.5%
	More than 20 times per day	73	15.7%
Monthly Online Shopping Expenditure (IDR)	< 100,000	124	26.7%
	100,000 - 249,000	172	37.1%
	250,000 - 499,000	116	25.0%
	500,000 - 999,000	32	6.9%
	>1,000,000	20	4.3%

4.2. Measurement Model (Outer Model)

CFA results indicated that all indicator factor loadings on their respective latent constructs exceeded 0.70, demonstrating good convergent validity. The Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was above 0.50, and Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs were above 0.70, thus meeting reliability requirements. These results indicate that the research instrument possesses highly adequate psychometric quality.

4.3. Structural Model and Goodness-of-Fit Test

The structural model demonstrated a good fit with the data. Key fit indices were as follows: χ^2/df =1.343 (acceptable<3.0), RMSEA=0.0558 (good<0.08), SRMR=0.0315 (good<0.08), CFI=0.992 (excellent>0.95), NFI=0.968 (excellent>0.95), and GFI=0.919 (good>0.90). These values collectively confirm that the hypothesized model fits the observed data well.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing (Path Analysis)

Path analysis results are presented narratively and in Table 2.

Table 2. Path Analysis Results

Direct path	B	t statistics	p values
SMMA → Purchase Intention	0.427	4.778	0.000
SMMA → Brand Image	0.603	5.738	0.000
SMMA → Brand Awareness	0.809	12.373	0.000
Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.463	5.034	0.000
Brand Awareness → Brand Image	0.312	3.044	0.002
Indirect Effects	**B**	**t statistics**	**p values**
SMMA → Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.375	4.662	0.000
SMMA → Brand Awareness → Brand Image	0.252	2.942	0.003

Source : Data Processed, 2025

The following summarizes the hypothesis testing outcomes:

1. H1 is supported. SMMA has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (β=0.427; t=4.778; p=0.000).

2. H2 is supported. SMMA has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image (β=0.603; t=5.738; p=0.000).

3. H3 is supported. SMMA has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness (β=0.809; t=12.373; p=0.000).

4. H4 is supported. Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta=0.463$; $t=5.034$; $p=0.000$).

5. H5 is supported. Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image ($\beta=0.312$; $t=3.044$; $p=0.002$).

6. For testing the mediation effects (H6 and H7), the significance of the indirect paths was examined.

7. H6 is supported. Brand Awareness significantly mediates the effect of SMMA on Purchase Intention (β indirect$=0.375$; $t=4.662$; $p=0.000$).

8. H7 is supported. Brand Awareness significantly mediates the effect of SMMA on Brand Image (β indirect$=0.252$; $t=2.942$; $p=0.003$).

It is noteworthy that while the direct effects of SMMA on Brand Image ($\beta=0.603$) and Purchase Intention ($\beta=0.427$) are strong, the presence of partial mediation by Brand Awareness indicates that a substantial portion of SMMA's influence on these outcomes also occurs by first elevating consumer awareness.

These findings strongly support all proposed hypotheses. The exceptionally strong effect of SMMA on Brand Awareness ($\beta=0.809$) confirms a core proposition of the Hierarchy of Effects Model and aligns with prior research (Hutter et al. (2013); Supartiwi, Ariyanti, and Trianasari (2022)). In Indonesia, where society is highly engaged with social media, interactive and entertaining marketing activities (such as TikTok Shop live streams or Instagram challenge content) effectively embed brand names in consumers' minds.

Another significant result is the full mediating role of Brand Awareness in the SMMA-Brand Image relationship. This implies that SMMA does not instantaneously create a positive image. Consumers first need to recognize and recall the brand (top-of-mind), after which positive associations and perceptions regarding quality, value, and brand identity can form. This finding reinforces Keller (1993) view that awareness is the foundational first step in the brand equity pyramid.

Furthermore, the direct effect of SMMA on Purchase Intention remains significant even after accounting for mediation, suggesting other mechanisms beyond brand awareness are at play. For instance, SMMA might directly influence purchase

intention through exclusive discount offers (customization) or impulsive triggers from trendy and viral content, consistent with findings by Lima, Cruz, and Pacheco (2024).

These results align with studies by Bilgin (2018) and Johansson and Hiltula (2021), which found positive relationships between SMMA and brand awareness/image. However, this study provides an additional contribution by demonstrating that, within the Indonesian context, the strength of SMMA's influence on Brand Awareness is considerably greater than in studies from other countries. The authors posit that the remarkably high frequency of social media interaction where a majority of users access platforms more than five times daily can be explained by the characteristic high sociability and profound social media engagement of Indonesian society (We Are Social 2025). This sustained, daily immersion makes the population notably more receptive to marketing activities conducted on these platforms.

The mediation findings also support and extend research by Amalia and Kurniawati (2023), who found brand awareness and image mediating the relationship between SMMA and repurchase intention. A key difference is that the present study employs CB-SEM, providing a more rigorous confirmation of the model structure and revealing more precise relationship strengths.

This study offers several theoretical contributions. First, it successfully integrates TPB and the HoE Model within a comprehensive framework to explain digital consumer behavior. The results validate that cognitive (awareness) and affective (image) processes sequentially serve as crucial links between marketing stimuli (SMMA) and conative response (purchase intention). Second, by using CB-SEM/LISREL and reporting a complete set of goodness-of-fit indices, this research offers a more rigorous and systematic methodology for testing mediation models in marketing, a field historically dominated by PLS-SEM.

For marketing practitioners and brand owners in Indonesia, these findings provide clear strategic guidance:

1. Enhance SMMA quality focus on creating entertaining, customized, and trend-relevant content to build deep awareness, rather than merely increasing post volume.

2. Invest in building awareness as a foundation, before launching image-building or sales promotion programs, ensure the target market is highly familiar with the brand. Utilize branded hashtags, consistent visual identity, and awareness-focused campaigns.

3. Leverage mediation for layered strategies, design SMMA campaigns with layered objectives: (a) content for awareness (education, introduction), (b) content for image building (testimonials, brand values), and (c) content for conversion (clear calls-to-action). These three layers should be interconnected.

5. Conclusion

This study successfully confirms that Social Media Marketing Activities serve as a potent driver of Brand Awareness, which subsequently acts as a primary catalyst in forming Brand Image and Purchase Intention among Indonesian digital consumers. All direct and indirect (mediation) hypotheses were proven significant. The core finding underscores that Brand Awareness plays a vital mediating role, affirming the importance of establishing a robust cognitive foundation before advancing toward affective and conative marketing objectives.

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