

The Influence of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust on Buying Decisions

Original Article

Gatot Wijayanto^{1*}, Feby Evelyn², Umi Fadilah Fatoni³, Wawan Nurdiansyah⁴

¹Universitas Riau, Indonesia

²Universitas Putra Bangsa, Indonesia

^{3,4}Politeknik Stibisnis, Indonesia

Email: ^{1*)}gatot.wijayanto@lecturer.unri.ac.id, ²⁾febyevelyna@gmail.com, ³⁾fadilahfatoni@unri.ac.id, ⁴⁾wawan.nd@gmail.com

⁴⁾wawan.nd@gmail.com

Received: 19 June 2026

Accepted: 26 July 2026

Published online: 19 August 2026

Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust on Buying Decision. The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method involving 250 respondents who had experience interacting with brands through social media and had made or considered making a purchase. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, while the structural model showed that the three independent variables collectively explained 68.7% of the variance in Buying Decision. The hypothesis testing results revealed that Social Media Marketing had a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.286$; $t = 4.521$; $p < 0.001$). Brand Awareness also had a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.241$; $t = 3.876$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Customer Trust demonstrated the strongest positive and significant influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.418$; $t = 6.742$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that effective digital marketing activities, strong brand recognition, and consumer confidence are important factors in shaping purchasing decisions. The study suggests that businesses should integrate engaging social media marketing with consistent brand-building and trust-building strategies to strengthen consumer confidence and increase purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Trust, Buying Decision, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing.

1. Introduction

Social media has become an important component of modern marketing as businesses increasingly use digital platforms to communicate with consumers and promote their products. The rapid growth of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other social networking sites has changed the way consumers obtain information, evaluate brands, and make purchasing decisions (Kim & Ko, 2012). Unlike conventional marketing, social media marketing enables businesses to create interactive communication, distribute engaging content, and build relationships with consumers in real time (Tafesse & Wien, 2018; Dipoatmodjo et al., 2026). Consequently, effective social media marketing can influence consumer perceptions and encourage consumers to consider a particular product or brand when making purchasing decisions (Liu et al., 2019; Windarsari & Arif, 2026).



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

In addition to social media marketing, brand awareness plays an important role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior (Liang & Mackey, 2011; Wilson et al., 2024). Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are able to recognize or recall a particular brand when considering products within a specific category (Wesneski, 2016). Consumers are often more likely to consider brands that are familiar to them because familiarity can reduce the effort and uncertainty involved in evaluating alternatives (Zeqiri et al., 2025; Windarsari & Rostina, 2025). Strong brand awareness can therefore provide businesses with a competitive advantage by increasing the likelihood that their products will enter consumers' consideration sets. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, maintaining high brand awareness is particularly important because consumers are exposed to numerous brands and marketing messages on a daily basis (Razak, 2025; Zainuddin, 2023).

Customer trust is another important factor that may determine whether consumers ultimately decide to purchase a product. Trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand will deliver the promised value, provide accurate information, and act consistently with consumers' expectations (Hikmah, 2023; Masruroh et al., 2024). This factor becomes particularly relevant in digital environments, where consumers may face uncertainty regarding product quality, seller credibility, transaction security, and the accuracy of online information. A trustworthy brand can reduce consumers' perceived risk and create greater confidence in purchasing decisions (Muharam et al., 2021; Widyastuti et al., 2019). Therefore, businesses need to establish and maintain customer trust through transparent communication, reliable products and services, and consistent interactions across digital platforms.

The relationship between social media marketing, brand awareness, customer trust, and buying decision is increasingly relevant because consumer decision-making is no longer based solely on direct product experience or traditional advertising (Arif & Windarsari, 2026; Windawaty et al., 2026). Consumers can encounter brand-related information through social media content, online reviews, influencer recommendations, customer comments, and digital interactions (Ernestivita et al., 2026; Wijayanthi et al., 2026). Social media marketing can increase consumers' exposure to a brand, while repeated exposure and engaging communication can strengthen brand awareness. At the same time, credible and consistent social media communication may contribute to customer trust, which can subsequently influence consumers' willingness to choose and purchase a product (Riu et al., 2026). Examining these factors simultaneously can therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing activities influence consumer buying behavior.

Based on this context, this study examines the influence of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust on Buying Decision. The study is expected to contribute to the understanding of consumer decision-making in the digital marketing environment by identifying the extent to which these three factors influence consumers' purchasing decisions. From a practical perspective, the findings may assist businesses and marketers in developing more effective social media strategies, strengthening brand recognition, and building consumer trust. Academically, the study may also provide empirical evidence regarding the interconnected roles of digital marketing communication, brand-related perceptions, and trust in explaining consumer buying decisions.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the influence of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust on Buying Decision. The population consisted of consumers who had experience interacting with or purchasing products through social media platforms. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely having seen or interacted with social media marketing content from the relevant brand and having sufficient experience to evaluate the purchasing process. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online. All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The questionnaire consisted of four main variables: Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Trust, and Buying Decision. Social Media Marketing was measured through indicators related to the quality, attractiveness, informativeness, interactivity, and engagement of marketing activities conducted through social media. Brand Awareness was measured based on consumers' ability to recognize, recall, and identify the brand among competing alternatives. Customer Trust was assessed through consumers' confidence in the brand's reliability, honesty, credibility, and ability to fulfill its promises. Meanwhile, Buying Decision was measured based on consumers' willingness to choose, purchase, and recommend the product after evaluating available alternatives. Before hypothesis testing, the questionnaire data were evaluated for validity and reliability to ensure that the measurement instruments adequately represented the constructs being investigated.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis consisted of two stages: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model was assessed through outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) to evaluate indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The structural model was subsequently evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping to determine the significance and direction of the relationships between Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Trust, and Buying Decision. The hypotheses were supported when the resulting p-value was below 0.05 and the corresponding relationship was statistically significant.

3. Results and Discussion

A total of 250 respondents participated in this study. The respondents were consumers who had experience interacting with brands through social media and had made or considered making a purchase based on information obtained from digital platforms. The descriptive results indicate that respondents generally provided positive assessments of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Trust, and Buying Decision. The mean scores for the constructs were above the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale, indicating that respondents perceived social media marketing activities as relatively attractive and informative, recognized

the brands being evaluated, had confidence in the brands, and demonstrated relatively strong purchasing intentions and decisions. These findings provide an appropriate basis for further analysis using PLS-SEM.

The measurement model was first evaluated to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs. The outer loadings of all indicators ranged from 0.711 to 0.889, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.842 to 0.901, while Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.893 to 0.928, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.626 to 0.721, which were above the minimum recommended value of 0.50. These results demonstrate that the indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs and that the measurement model achieved acceptable convergent validity and reliability.

Table 1. Measurement Model

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Result
Social Media Marketing	0.901	0.928	0.721	Reliable & Valid
Brand Awareness	0.842	0.893	0.676	Reliable & Valid
Customer Trust	0.887	0.918	0.691	Reliable & Valid
Buying Decision	0.865	0.905	0.657	Reliable & Valid

Discriminant validity was subsequently assessed using the HTMT criterion. The HTMT ratios between the constructs were below the conservative threshold of 0.90, indicating that each construct was empirically distinct from the others. The highest HTMT value was 0.842 between Customer Trust and Buying Decision, while the lowest value was 0.704 between Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness. Therefore, the results indicate that the constructs measured different aspects of consumer behavior and that discriminant validity was established.

The structural model was then evaluated to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables toward Buying Decision. The R^2 value for Buying Decision was 0.687, indicating that Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust jointly explained 68.7% of the variance in Buying Decision, while the remaining 31.3% was explained by factors outside the model. The effect-size analysis indicated that Customer Trust had the strongest contribution to Buying Decision, followed by Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness. The Q^2 value for Buying Decision was 0.441, indicating satisfactory predictive relevance. The SRMR value was 0.057, which was below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.08, suggesting that the proposed structural model demonstrated an acceptable level of model fit.

The hypothesis testing results obtained through bootstrapping are presented below.

Table 2. Structural Model

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
------------	--------------	---------	-------------	---------	----------

H1	Social Media Marketing → Buying Decision	0.286	4.521	0.000	Supported
H2	Brand Awareness → Buying Decision	0.241	3.876	0.000	Supported
H3	Customer Trust → Buying Decision	0.418	6.742	0.000	Supported

The hypothesis testing results demonstrate that all three proposed relationships were positive and statistically significant. Social Media Marketing had a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.286$; $t = 4.521$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This result indicates that more effective and engaging social media marketing activities are associated with stronger consumer buying decisions. Brand Awareness also had a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.241$; $t = 3.876$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. This finding suggests that consumers who are more familiar with and able to recognize or recall a brand are more likely to make a favorable buying decision. Finally, Customer Trust demonstrated the strongest positive influence on Buying Decision ($\beta = 0.418$; $t = 6.742$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. This indicates that consumer confidence in the reliability, credibility, and integrity of a brand is a particularly important determinant of purchasing decisions.

3.1. Discussion

The results demonstrate that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision. This finding indicates that consumers are more likely to make favorable purchasing decisions when they are exposed to social media content that is informative, attractive, interactive, and relevant to their needs. Social media provides brands with opportunities to communicate directly with consumers, present product information, demonstrate product benefits, and create engaging experiences that can reduce uncertainty during the purchasing process. The significant effect found in this study suggests that social media marketing is not merely a promotional tool but also an important mechanism for influencing consumer evaluations and purchase-related decisions. When marketing content is perceived as credible and engaging, consumers may develop stronger interest in the product and become more confident in proceeding with a purchase.

The findings also confirm that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant influence on Buying Decision. Consumers who can easily recognize or recall a brand are more likely to include that brand among the alternatives considered when making a purchase. Strong brand awareness can reduce the cognitive effort required to evaluate competing products because familiar brands tend to be perceived as more accessible and easier to evaluate. In the context of social media, repeated exposure to brand names, visual identities, product content, and consumer-generated discussions can strengthen consumers' ability to recognize and remember

a brand. Therefore, businesses should consistently communicate their brand identity across digital platforms to maintain consumer familiarity and increase the probability that the brand will be selected when consumers are ready to purchase.

Customer Trust was found to have the strongest positive and significant influence on Buying Decision, making it the most influential predictor among the three variables examined. This finding highlights the importance of consumer confidence in determining whether marketing exposure and brand recognition ultimately translate into purchasing behavior. Consumers may recognize a brand and engage with its social media content, but they may still hesitate to purchase if they question the brand's reliability, product quality, honesty, or ability to fulfill its promises. Trust can reduce perceived risk, particularly in digital purchasing environments where consumers cannot directly inspect products or interact with sellers. Therefore, brands need to develop trustworthy relationships through transparent information, consistent product quality, responsive communication, authentic customer reviews, and reliable fulfillment of their promises. The stronger influence of Customer Trust also suggests that social media marketing strategies should prioritize credibility and relationship building rather than focusing exclusively on promotional content.

The findings demonstrate that Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust collectively play important roles in explaining Buying Decision, with Customer Trust emerging as the strongest determinant. These results suggest that an effective digital marketing strategy should integrate promotional activities with long-term brand-building and trust-building efforts. Social media can attract consumer attention and increase brand exposure, while consistent brand communication can strengthen awareness; however, trust appears to be particularly important in transforming consumer interest into a favorable buying decision. From a managerial perspective, businesses should therefore create engaging social media campaigns while simultaneously ensuring that the information presented is accurate, the brand remains consistent, and customer expectations are fulfilled. Such an integrated approach can strengthen consumer confidence and ultimately increase the likelihood of purchase.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Trust significantly and positively influence Buying Decision. The findings indicate that effective social media marketing can increase consumer engagement and encourage favorable purchasing decisions, while stronger brand awareness makes consumers more likely to recognize, recall, and select a particular brand among competing alternatives. Customer Trust emerged as the strongest predictor of Buying Decision, demonstrating that consumer confidence in a brand's reliability, credibility, and ability to fulfill its promises is particularly important in converting consumer interest into purchasing behavior. Overall, the findings highlight that businesses should not rely solely on promotional activities but should develop an integrated strategy that combines engaging social media marketing, consistent brand-building activities, and trust-oriented customer relationships. By strengthening these three aspects simultaneously, businesses can improve consumer confidence and increase the likelihood of favorable buying decisions in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

5. References

- Arif, H. M., & Windarsari, W. R. (2026). Between Algorithm and Adat: How Bugis-Makassar MSMEs Negotiate AI Marketing Through the Lens of Siri' na Pacce. *Economics and Business Journal (ECBIS)*, 4(3), 897–908. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ecbis.v4i3.308>
- Dipoatmodjo, T. S. P., Burhanuddin, & Arif, H. M. (2026). Employee Adaptation To Artificial Intelligence In The Workplace: A Phenomenological Study In South Sulawesi Companies. *Economics and Business Journal (ECBIS)*, 4(2), 547–564. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ecbis.v4i2.379>
- Ernestivita, G., Suhendra, E. S., & Subagyo. (2026). The Role of Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Customer Engagement in Enhancing MSME Competitiveness. *Journal Management & Economics Review (JUMPER)*, 3(10. 1), 433–448. <https://doi.org/10.59971/jumper.v3i10.1.1042>
- Hikmah, A. (2023). *The Effect of Perception of Benefits and Perception of Security on Intention to Use through Consumer Trust in the DANA Digital Wallet Application*. 1(4).
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1480–1486.
- Liang, B. A., & Mackey, T. K. (2011). Prevalence and global health implications of social media in direct-to-consumer drug advertising. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 13(3), e64. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.1775>
- Liu, Y., Jiang, C., & Zhao, H. (2019). Assessing product competitive advantages from the perspective of customers by mining user-generated content on social media. *Decision Support Systems*, 123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2019.113079>
- Masrurroh, I., Sumartik, S., & Sari, D. K. (2024). Eservice Quality Trust Brand Image Customer Loyalty Dynamics (Kualitas Layanan Kepercayaan Citra Merek Loyalitas Pelanggan Dinamika). *Journal of Business Economics and Agribusiness*, 1(3), 1–22.
- Muharam, H., Chaniago, H., Endraria, E., & Harun, A. Bin. (2021). E-service quality, customer trust and satisfaction: market place consumer loyalty analysis. *Jurnal Minds: Manajemen Ide Dan Inspirasi*, 8(2), 237–254.
- Razak, A. (2025). Brand Awareness and Consumer Preferences in the Food and Beverage Industry: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Journal of Business, Management, and Accounting*, 1(5), 218–225.
- Riu, I. A., Radjab, I., Arif, H. M., Haeruddin, M. I. W., & Aswar, N. F. (2026). Consumer Trust In Influencer-Based Digital Marketing: A Qualitative Study Among Beauty Product Consumers In Makassar City. *Economics and Business Journal (ECBIS)*, 4(2), 533–546. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ecbis.v4i2.378>
- Tafesse, W., & Wien, A. (2018). Implementing social media marketing strategically: an empirical assessment. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 34(9–10), 732–749.
- Wesneski, L. (2016). Improving brand reputation of the DoD VI archive. *Archiving 2016 - Final Program and Proceedings*, 45–47. <https://doi.org/10.2352/issn.2168-3204.2016.1.0.45>
- Widyastuti, S., Said, M., Siswono, S., & Firmansyah, D. A. (2019). *Customer trust through green corporate image, green marketing strategy, and social responsibility: A case study*.
- Wijayanthi, I. A. T., & Laswitarni, N. K. (2026). The Influence of Social Media Advertising Exposure and Influencer Credibility on Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention. *Journal Management & Economics Review (JUMPER)*, 3(10. 1), 263–278.

<https://doi.org/10.59971/jumper.v3i10.1.1025>

- Wilson, G., Johnson, O., & Brown, W. (2024). *The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty*.
- Windarsari, W. R., & Rostina. (2025). AI-Personalized Ads and Indonesian Adolescents' Buying Decisions. *Journal Management & Economics Review (JUMPER)*, 2(7), 221–226. <https://doi.org/10.59971/jumper.v2i7.504>
- Windarsari, W. R., & Arif, H. M. (2026). Differentiation of Engagement Quality in Social Commerce: A Systematic Analysis of Trust-Based Engagement on Repeat Purchase Behavior. *Kompeten: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 4(6), 1692–1702. <https://doi.org/10.57141/kompeten.v4i6.261>
- Windawaty, H., Yuliasih, E., Irmadiani, N. D., & Marjuki. (2026). Analyzing the Role of Responsiveness, Empathy, Reliability, and Customer Satisfaction on Service Recovery Effectiveness. *Journal Management & Economics Review (JUMPER)*, 4(1), 787–796. <https://doi.org/10.59971/jumper.v4i1.1237>
- Zainuddin, M. S. (2023). Pengaruh Ewom, Endorsement Dan Brand Awareness Terhadap Minat Beli Ms Glow Melalui Brand Image Sebagai Variabel Intervening Di Makassar = The Influence Of Ewom, Endorsement And Brand Awareness On Interest In Buying Ms Glow Through Brand Image As An Intervening Variable In Makassar. Universitas Hasanuddin.
- Zeqiri, J., Koku, P. S., Dobre, C., Milovan, A.-M., Hasani, V. V., & Paientko, T. (2025). The impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, brand engagement and purchase intention in emerging economies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 43(1), 28–49.