



The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Purchase Intention in Skincare: A Mediating Role of Brand Image among Generation Z

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Abstract: This research is expected to analyze the impact of social media marketing towards purchase intention with brand image as a mediating variable for users skincare product. The approach employed in this research is quantitatively with primary data collected by using a questionnaire distributed to all respondents and assessment parameter with Likert scale 1-5. The research objects were generation Z, namely respondents who are 18-28 years old and have already bought skin care products at least once for the past six months through an electronic commerce application hearth that they live in Semarang Regency. The sample consisted of 80 respondents who were chosen purposively. Analysis was built on the SEM-PLS methodology implemented by SmartPLS software version 4.1.1.2 Data processing technique was SEM-PLS model. The findings of the research indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Purchase intention is positively influenced by social media marketing. Brand image positively influences purchase intention to a great extent. Brand image Your ultimate goal is to use your external corporate identity applications in order to acquire a sustainable and positive brand image among your target audience.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Skincare, Semarang.

1. Introduction

Generation Z are heavy users of social media, and form an important segment for investigating the operations in today's digital markets. A majority (71%) of social media users trust recommendations from the platform when making purchases, underscoring the significance of social media marketing strategies for skincare brand that hopes to reach and impact this generation [1]. One of the most central things from this is building purchase intention is brand image, and the importance of how a product was seen by consumer.

Research shows that quality of communication is an important factor on social media affecting the way consumers perceive a brand [2]. This is to say that when advertising via social media, skincare brands put out their brand but quality content has higher probability of grabbing attention from marketing Generation Z generation Know-how and creative contents are important because previous researches confirm that enhancing posting can trigger the purchase intentions [2].

Brand image functions not only as a mediating but is also generated by marketing efforts on SoMe. Social media marketing strategy can influence the enhancement of brand equity perception by users [3] is argued as follows according to one study. It implies to say that when skincare companies manage social media involvement with their consumers, they also are actively constructing an image or the formation towards trust and purchase preference of the product.

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As technology advances and social media usage changes, it is important to know how brands are interacting with Generation Z on these websites. This generation only not looking for a product. They are looking for an experience and the value of a brand [4]. Specifically, involvement of social media is a factor that might lead for customer loyalty effecting purchase intention for skincare products (Muchardie et al., 2016). In particular, involvement of social media is a possibility that might be included for customer loyalty influencing purchase intention for skincare products (Muchardie et al., 2016). But on social media, the hugs and good will are not all that could be found. Destructive and fraudulent communication Messages that are harmful, but also hypocritical can have negative impacts for the brand image and purchase intention. Subsequently, Gen Z consumers have been found to become more sensitive to brands' credibility and marketers' truthfulness in their social media engagement [5]. In turn this is a huge problem for brands looking to communicate some messaging that's fun but also true and realistic.

The intervening effect of brand images is thus salient in this regard. A Study of How a Brand's Image Impact the Reactions and Shopping Behaviour towards Social Media Marketing Activities by Consumers. General positive image might magnify the impact of social media marketing over purchase intention [6]. In other words, the stronger positive brand image of consumers perceived, Gen Z may be the more purchasing behavior for sooth skin product.

A further element to acknowledge is the role of user social media behaviour and its influence on purchase intention. Another study demonstrated that consumer engagement ith e.g., likes, comments or shares, has a positive impact on brand image and thus purchase intentions [7]. These results show that the cosmetic brands needs to take control of these transactions in order to influence the effect on consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions.

In The digital era it is already well known that social media is the place to advertise in today's digital environment mainly due to its potential for immediacy connection between brands and consumers. This results in a network in which brand image is formed by consumer experiences and interactions [8]. And yet, an effective approach to marketing is one that really does focus on user experience, and other things, such as long term relationships.

The results of these surveys demonstrate the influence of social media marketing on purchasing attitudes, especially for Gen Z who have a new concept to approach with brands. If you are a skincare brand then you need to use this knowledge and insight to fine tune your marketing efforts, create a bundle of contextually relevant content and work out how you can best react for your brand.

Finally, although it is challenging to attend SMMS, by increasing brand image and user engagement it can assist skincare brands in solving purchase intention. This paper therefore aims to provide practitioners with actionable recommendations for brands in Contemporary Marketing Communications (CMC) digital economy environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing can be referred to as promoting goods through social-media sites as well engaging consumers in a conversational and interactive way [9]. In another summary, Kristiawan and Keni [10] terms social media marketing as a product promotion technology where the internet is used for company or personal promotion. In this way, they can engage in far more effective advertisement than regular marketing. In research by Choedon and Lee [11], the indicators of Social Media Marketing include:

- a. Social media is engaging
- b. Social media as a means of interaction
- c. Social media presents the latest information
- d. Provides relevant information and services
- e. Shares experiences on social media

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is the set of beliefs held by consumers about a particular brand. Constructing favorable brand image is essential to arousing purchase intentions, especially in skincare industry, when customers frequently draw on the judgment of others, and corporate reputation [12]. In the meantime, Izzah et al. [13], the brand image can be explained as a memory in consumer’s mind with respect to the particular brand comprising of positive and negative aspects. The results of research developed by Keller [14], where the Brand Image indicators include:

- a. Brand identity
- b. Brand personality
- c. Brand association
- d. Brand attitude and behavior
- e. Brand benefit and competence

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is considered the probability of which a consumer plans to buy a product in near future. In skincare products, the intention of purchase consumers also affected by factors like brand image and effectiveness of marketing media such as social media [15]. Purchase intention is considered by Dabbous et al., [16] as the intersection of the consumer’s interest in a product or brand which goes with his or her purchase power. Purchase Intention variable indicators according to research by Aji et al., [17], include:

- a. Social media influences consumer decision-making.
- b. Social media increases consumer purchase intention.
- c. Planning to repurchase products promoted on social media.
- d. Planning to become a customer.

2.4 Hypothesis

In this specific research context, we based on previous empirical findings to develop hypotheses that might help us look at aspects related to the interplay in question. The following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
- H2: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand image.
- H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
- H4: Brand image positively and significantly mediates the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention.

The fundamental logic underlying this hypothesis is that final variables are interacting with and complementing each other in creating competitive advantage.

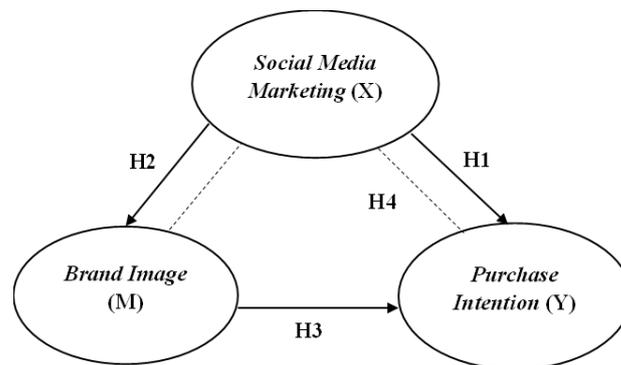


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Model

In this study, a quantitative methodology is used and causality is designed. In this study the data are primary and oriented on fact. This research returns to its original investigative mission by drawing from a quasi-experimental design in which the primary purpose, at least,

may be representing an empirical test of hypotheses that specify relationships among independent and dependent variables measured according to guideline principles.

3.2 Population and Sample

The respondents in this study are consumer who has ever bought skincare products at the e-commerce application within six months. Respondents for the samples are Generation Z having an age of 18-28 years old and live in Semarang Regency. The sampling employed npn probability sampling and purposive technique. Considering minimum sample size as well as maximum sample size in between 30-500 samples [18]. A sample size of 80 subjects was, upon a number of criteria selected by the researcher, considered suitable.

3.3 Data Collection

A specific interview guide was created to collect primary data based on the theoretical dimensions of each LDV. Face validity was obtained by experts' feedback, and the construct validation was verified by exploratory factor analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Identity

Respondent characteristics based on gender category obtained the number of female respondents as many as 59 respondents (73.75%) and the number of male respondents as many as 21 respondents (26.25%). Based on the questionnaire data distributed, there are three age categories of respondents consisting of 60% aged 22-25 years with a total of 42 respondents (52.5%), respondents aged 18-21 years with as many as 25 respondents (31.25%), and respondents aged 26-28 years with as many as 13 respondents (16.25%). The skincare category purchased by respondents consists of the Wardah brand, as much as 31.25%, with a total of 25 respondents; then the Hanasui brand, used by as much as 20%, with a total of 16 respondents; then the Maybelline brand, as much as 11.25%, with a total of 9 people; the Somethinc brand, as much as 23%, with a total of 4 respondents; and other skincare brands, used by 32.5% of 26 respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Identity

Information	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	21	26.25%
Female	59	73.75%
Age		
18 - 21 Tahun	25	31.25%
22 - 25 Tahun	42	52.5%
26 - 28 Tahun	13	16.25%
Frequently purchased skincare		
Maybeline	9	11.25%
Hanasui	16	20%
Wardah	25	31.25%
Somethinc	4	5%
Other	26	32.5%

4.2 Convergent Validity

Similarly, the convergent validity can be evaluated by correlating the indicator with its construct. However a value of Outer Loading is 0.5-0.6 is still feasible but it can be said that the construct has significant influence if its correlative value above 0.7 [19]. All of the indicators in Figure 2 are larger than 0.7, which means that it has satisfactory review results.

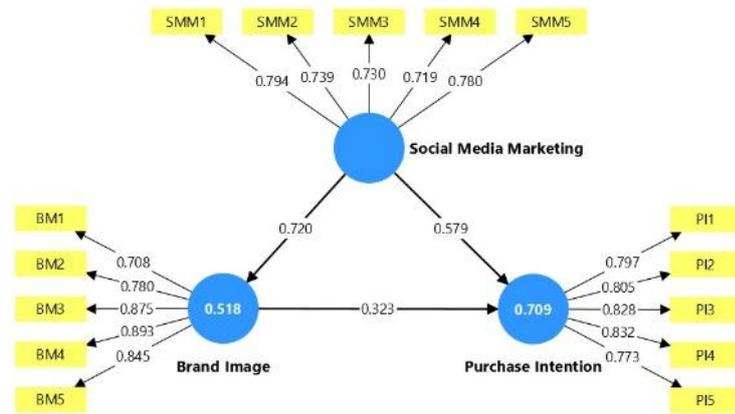


Figure 2. Convergent Validity

4.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity testing evaluates the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs and thus is empirically distinguishable [20]. Table 2 shows that the AVE value for each variable is above 0.5 and can be declared valid.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Construct reliability and validity - Overview	
	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Image	0.678
Purchase Intention	0.651
Social Media Marketing	0.567

4.4 Composite Reliability

Construct validity meets the criteria of reliability if Cronbach Alpha value is more than 0.7, and it shows that indicators used to measure latent variable variations are stable and consistent [21]. According to Table 3, findings of the study demonstrate that Composite Reliability value than (0.70) which indicates that all of variable meet the reliability and validity criteria for further examine in the structural model.

Table 3. Composite Reliability

R-square - Overview			
	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Brand Image	0.879	0.880	0.913
Purchase Intention	0.866	0.870	0.903
Social Media Marketing	0.810	0.817	0.867

4.5 R Square (R²)

R-square (R²) is a measure of the determination between endogenous and exogenous variables. A model will be considered good if the value of R-square is 0.75, fair if the R-square is then 0.50 and weak if its R-square is less than 0.25 [19]. As can be seen in Table 4, the R-square for brand image variable is equal to 0.518 (R-square moderate) and the R-square for purchase intention variable is equal to 0.709 (R-square strong).

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

R-square - Overview		
	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand Image	0.518	0.512
Purchase Intention	0.709	0.701

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

The t-test, which is commonly employed in regression methods, measures the merit of a model based on the t-value associated with each coefficient. The t-value quantifies how certain we are that a given predictor is exactly in the center of its data which means that their relationship differs from zero. Also in PLS analysis, each t-value indicates the importance of a coefficient in low-rank approximation respectively. Significance of a coefficient is attributed to the Its P-value being lower than a certain conventionally accepted value, usually 0.005. The bootstrapping results are presented in Table 5 bellow.

Table 5. Path Coefficient

Construct	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standart Deviation	T- statistics	P values	Result
SMM → BI	0.720	0.725	0.052	13.962	0.000	accepted
BI → PI	0.323	0.325	0.093	3.492	0.000	accepted
SMM → PI	0.579	0.580	0.093	6.200	0.000	accepted
SMM → BI → PI	0.233	0.236	0.073	3.206	0.001	accepted

The hypothesis test between social media marketing and brand image showed a p-value of 0.000. This means the t-statistic meets the requirement of a p-value <0.05, while the coefficient is 0.720. It can be concluded that this hypothesis is accepted.

The hypothesis test between brand image and purchase intention showed a p-value of 0.000, which is <0.05. The coefficient value was 0.323, therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption of the social media marketing variable on brand equity is accepted.

In the hypothesis test between the social media marketing variable and purchase intention, the p-value was 0.000. This indicates that the p-value is <0.05, while the coefficient value obtained was 0.579. Therefore, it can be concluded that this hypothesis is accepted.

Meanwhile, in the hypothesis test between the social media marketing variable and purchase intention mediated by brand image, the p-value was 0.001. This indicates that the p-value is <0.05, while the coefficient value obtained was 0.233. Therefore, it can be concluded that this hypothesis is accepted.

4.7 Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Goodness of Fit (GoF) is a hypothesis test designed to assess the feasibility and accuracy of a model used for validation in SEM-PLS. A structural equation model can be said to be fit if the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Residual) value is <0.10 and the model is declared unfit if the SRMR value is >0.15 [22]. A good Chi-square value is if it has a value range >0.05 [23]. The NFI (Normed Fit Index) value that indicates a good model is if the NFI value is <0.90 [23]. Based on the results in Table 6, the SRMR value is 0.089, the Chi-square is 294.703, and the NFI is 0.674, so the model in this study is declared fit.

Table 6. Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Model fit	Goodness of Fit (GoF)	
	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.089	0.089
Chi-square	294.703	294.703
NFI	0.674	0.674

4.8 Effect Size

The other parameter that can measure the level of correlation of a variable is Effect Size, which is interpreted as the difference in effect occurrence between control and

experimental class [24]. A small F-square value is 0.02, a medium effect size is 0.15 and a large one is 0.35 [20]. According to the information in Table 7, brand image was found as having a weakly effect on purchase intention (effect size=0.17). Meanwhile, the variable of social media marketing has a high influence on brand image with an effect size score of 1.075. At the same time, effect size of 0.555 points out that social media marketing variable has a significant impact on purchase intention.

Table 7. Effect Size

f-square - Matrix		
	Brand Image	Purchase Intention
Brand Image		0.17
Social Media Marketing	1.075	0.55

5. Discussion

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

The summary of the testing of hypothesis one in this study shows a positive and significant effect between the variables of social media marketing on purchasing intention. It is that study based on the fact below (because $P < 0.05$); This result is consistent with a P-value of 0.000. These findings are similar to that of Asyakra and Rivai [25], on social media marketing that has been positively significant effect on consumer brand image Wardah cosmetics. Likewise, Anggrenita and Sander [26], confirm the significantly positive effect of social media marketing variables on purchase intention for MS Glow product.

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Image

Consequently, the results of Hypothesis Test 2 analysis in this study affirmed that brand image is significantly and positively associated with social media marketing. The P-value from the research test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This is comparable to the results of Oktaviani et al. [27] who reported that social media marketing variables has a significant and positive influence on coffee consumers brand image as well result in greater Jakarta. The study of Asyakra and Rivai [25] also found that the social media marketing variables significantly influenced the purchase intention of Wardah cosmetic users.

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The results of the third testing hypothesis in this study show that there is a positive and significant effect between variable (X) Brand Image with variable (Y) Purchase Intention. P-value < 0.05 by the test results also illustrated. These findings are consistent with the study of from Hartanti and Budiarti [28], which indicates brand image influence on purchase intention in Maybelline cosmetic product consumers in Sidoarjo. It can be inferred from Mardiana [29], that the brand image positive has a significant effect on purchase intention of cosmetic product Emina in Yogyakarta.

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Image

The conclusion from the fourth hypothesis test analysis in this study says that Brand Image variable is capable of mediating the effect of Social Media Marketing variable headed Purchase Intention. Further testing also shows the joint effect. This is very useful related to the study of Oktaviani et al., [27] that found social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention through brand image. Another study of Asyakra and Rivai [25], learnt that the brand image can mediate the impact of social media marketing towards purchase intention Wardah cosmetic users.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

According to the finding, marketing in a social media positively and significantly affects brand image, which significantly leads to increasing consumer purchase intention towards skincare product. The result provides evidence that brand image exerts significant mediation effects of digital marketing strategies on purchase decision, especially Gen Z group who frequently proceed the e-commerce application to shopping. Hence, firms must focus on

regular updating and management of their external corporate identity in social media to establish a strong and positive brand image in the mind of target audience.

Suggestions for Further Study Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that such studies be conducted with a larger sample that includes more diversity in geographic representation to generalize these findings. Researchers could also examine other moderating or mediating variables including consumer trust, digital engagement and the quality of social media content. In addition, a longitudinal study could also be implemented to follow consumer behaviour changes over time and analyse the long-term effect of digital marketing strategies towards brand loyalty and retention.

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