

Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness as Drivers of Purchase Decisions Insights from the Theory of Planned Behavior in the Beauty Industry

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh social media marketing terhadap purchasing decision dengan brand awareness sebagai variabel mediasi pada produk Scarlett Whitening menggunakan perspektif *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB). Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan desain survei terhadap 150 mahasiswa Universitas Alma Ata Yogyakarta yang pernah membeli Scarlett Whitening. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner daring dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa social media marketing berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap purchasing decision dan brand awareness. Brand awareness juga berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap purchasing decision, serta memediasi secara parsial hubungan antara social media marketing dan purchasing decision. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini menguatkan TPB dalam konteks pemasaran digital, bahwa sikap, norma subjektif, dan kontrol perilaku yang dirasakan dapat dibentuk melalui strategi pemasaran media sosial dan kesadaran merek. Secara praktis, temuan ini menyarankan Scarlett Whitening untuk mempertahankan konten promosi yang autentik, kreatif, dan konsisten di berbagai platform media sosial guna membangun kesadaran merek dan mendorong keputusan pembelian. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi variabel TPB dengan social media marketing dan brand awareness dalam industri kecantikan lokal.

Kata Kunci: *Social Media Marketing; Brand Awareness; Purchasing Decision; Theory of Planned Behavior; Scarlett Whitening*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of social media marketing on purchasing decisions, with brand awareness as a mediating variable, in the case of Scarlett Whitening, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) perspective. A quantitative approach was employed with a survey design involving 150 students from Alma Ata University, Yogyakarta, who had purchased Scarlett Whitening products. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions and brand awareness. Brand awareness also has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions and partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions. Theoretically, this study reinforces TPB in the digital marketing context, emphasizing that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can be shaped through social media marketing strategies and brand awareness. Practically, the findings suggest that Scarlett Whitening should maintain authentic, creative, and consistent promotional

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content across multiple social media platforms to build brand awareness and encourage purchasing decisions. The novelty of this study lies in integrating TPB variables with social media marketing and brand awareness within the local beauty industry context.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing; Brand Awareness; Purchasing Decision; Theory of Planned Behavior; Scarlett Whitening*

Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to marketing strategies, with social media now becoming one of the main channels for companies to promote their brands and products (Wibowo et al., 2021). Marketing through social media not only facilitates the online offering of goods and services but also increases the number of customers and expands market reach (Aji et al., 2020; Azzam et al., 2021). The role of social media, which was previously focused on being a marketing tool, has now evolved into a strategic source of marketing intelligence (Wibisono, 2023). Consumer behavior trends have also changed, with most consumers seeking product information through social media before making a purchase and preferring direct interaction with sellers via these platforms (Savitri & Wibisono, 2022). Such activities may include commenting, liking posts from official store accounts, or sharing content of products they are interested in (Tarabieh, 2022). A Populix survey of 1,020 respondents revealed that 86% of Indonesians shop through social media, with clothing (61%) and beauty products (43%) being the most purchased categories. The most frequently used platforms were TikTok Shop (46%), WhatsApp (10%), Facebook Shop (10%), and Instagram Shop (10%) (Yusra, 2022).

To understand consumer behavior on social media, this study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as its theoretical framework. According to Carfora et al. (2019), TPB explains that individual behavior is influenced by intentions that reflect planning and motivation to act. This theory has been widely used to predict both actual behavior and behavioral intentions (Tian et al., 2023) and assumes that the perceived ease or difficulty of a behavior will influence an individual's decision to engage in it. Sultan et al. (2020) emphasize that an individual's positive or negative attitude toward an object will influence their choice to act or not. In a marketing context, social media plays a vital role in influencing purchasing decisions as it can reach a wide range of consumers (Ariyani et al., 2023), transform audiences into customers as well as brand advocates, and disseminate information about products they use (Tarabieh, 2022). Furthermore, brand awareness is also a crucial factor in influencing purchasing decisions (Supiyandi et al., 2022) and can even serve as a mediator between social media marketing and purchasing decisions (Nofal et al., 2020).

Previous findings show that social media marketing can have a direct influence on purchasing decisions (Pujadas-Hostench et al., 2019; Nofal et al., 2020) as well as an indirect influence through brand awareness (Tarabieh, 2022). Several studies, such as Hanaysha (2022) and Staniewski & Awruk (2022), found no significant effect, making the role of the mediator variable relevant to investigate. Aljumah et al. (2023) emphasized that social media marketing is effective in building brand awareness, which in turn influences purchasing decisions, in line with the TPB concept (Qi & Angelika, 2019; Chopra et al., 2020; Hermina, 2023).

In the beauty industry, intense competition drives consumers to be more selective in choosing products. Local products such as Scarlett Whitening, founded in 2017 by Felicya

Angelista, have utilized social media as their main marketing channel, with a large audience reach on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook (Maulana & Lestariningsih, 2022). However, data from Dimia (2023) show a decline in Scarlett Whitening sales by up to 8% during the period July 2022–January 2023, following a significant increase in February–June 2022. This phenomenon is worth investigating, given that Scarlett Whitening has a large customer base but has experienced sales fluctuations amid intensive digital marketing activities. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the effect of social media marketing on purchasing decisions, with brand awareness as a mediating variable, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) perspective, in the case of Scarlett Whitening among students of Alma Ata University, Yogyakarta.

Theory Development and Hypotheses

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Media Marketing

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is understood as a framework that explains the influence on various behaviors, both directly and indirectly (McLaughlin & Stephens, 2019). In the context of digital marketing, social media marketing is a form of promotion conducted either directly or indirectly to increase consumer awareness, recognition, recall, and actions toward a brand, business, product, individual, or other entity (Li et al., 2021). TPB has been widely used to explain technology adoption, where intention is the main driver of a person's actions, and the stronger the intention, the greater the likelihood of the action being carried out (McLaughlin & Stephens, 2019). Through social media marketing, consumers can easily access the products they need via various channels such as blogging, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing (Li et al., 2021). This ease of access increases the likelihood of consumers making purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Brand Awareness

Within TPB, behavior related to brand awareness involves evaluating attitudes toward the brand, subjective norms that exert social pressure, and perceived control over the behavior considered appropriate (Omoruyi & Chinomona, 2019). Brand awareness plays an important role in shaping consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviors, driven by personal beliefs as well as moral values. Brand elements and product attributes are significant determinants of consumer purchase intentions (Omoruyi & Chinomona, 2019). Social media marketing can enhance brand awareness through the dissemination of engaging and easily shareable content, thereby making audiences more aware of a brand (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Dini & Abdurrahman, 2023).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness for Scarlett Whitening products.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Purchasing Decision

According to TPB, perceived behavioral control reflects the perceived ease or difficulty in performing a behavior (Olya et al., 2019). In the context of purchasing decisions, this relates to the ease with which consumers can recall or regain access to products of interest. Brand awareness is an important factor influencing purchasing decisions because consumers who

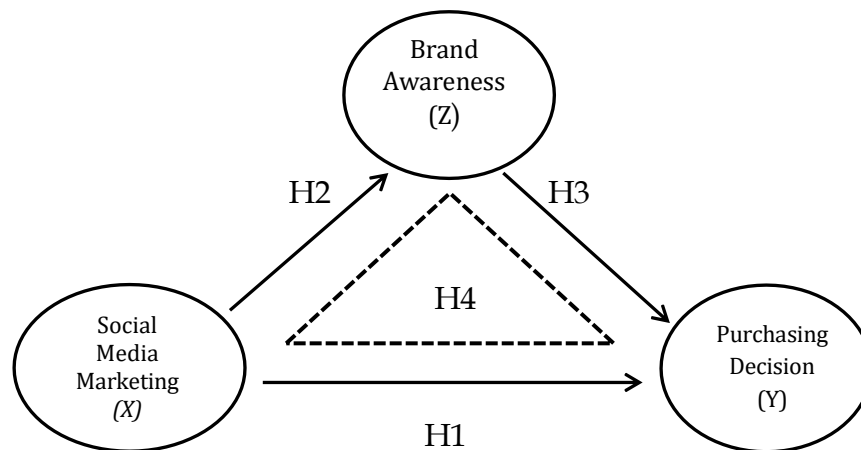
recognize a brand tend to have a positive perception and greater trust in making a purchase (Supiyandi et al., 2022; Andreani et al., 2021). Brand awareness encompasses consumers' ability to confirm previous exposure to a brand and to identify it again (Keller, 2001). The higher the level of brand awareness, the greater the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products.

The Role of Brand Awareness as a Mediator

Several studies have identified brand awareness as an important mediating variable in the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions (Nofal et al., 2020; Aljumah et al., 2023). Once the audience encounters engaging content on social media, brand awareness will increase, which in turn can drive purchasing decisions (Omoruyi & Chinomona, 2019). This is consistent with TPB, which emphasizes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control formed through brand awareness can influence consumers' intentions as well as their actual behaviors.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products through brand awareness.



Adapted from: (Nofal et al., 2020)

Method

This study employed a quantitative research method with a survey research design. The data collected were primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires via Google Forms. The sample consisted of 150 active students of Alma Ata University residing in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province who had purchased Scarlett Whitening products at least once between 2019 and 2024.

Data Analysis

Convergent Validity (Outer Loading)

Convergent validity is a measurement used to determine the relationship between the indicator attitudes and their latent variables (Lumba, 2019). The value of convergent validity can be observed through the outer loading values. The outer loading value indicates the relationship between the indicators and their constructs or latent variables. Indicators with low outer loading values indicate that the item does not perform as expected in the measurement model, with the desired outer loading value being greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 1. Convergent Validity (Outer Loading)

Variable X		
Kode Indikator	Muatan	Keterangan
SMM1	0,705	Valid
SMM2	0,865	Valid
SMM3	0,858	Valid
SMM4	0,778	Valid
Variable Y		
Kode Indikator	Muatan	Keterangan
PUD1	0,834	Valid
PUD2	0,865	Valid
PUD3	0,892	Valid
PUD4	0,891	Valid
Variable Z		
Kode Indikator	Muatan	Keterangan
BAW1	0,847	Valid
BAW2	0,883	Valid
BAW3	0,808	Valid
BAW4	0,779	Valid

Noted: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
 Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Based on Table 1 above, it can be concluded that all indicators for each variable have values greater than 0.70, which are considered good or valid. This means that the questions for each variable are able to explain the researcher's intended meaning and can be well understood by the respondents.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a measurement used to determine the extent to which the measurement items represent the variable being measured (Lumba, 2019). In this study, each variable has four indicators; therefore, this measurement assesses the extent to which these four indicators represent their respective variables. A measurement scale will be considered to have good convergent validity if it exceeds 0.7 to be deemed valid. The acceptable threshold for factor loading is around 0.6, which is considered sufficient and permissible to proceed with the research. Meanwhile, for the AVE value, the data will be considered valid and acceptable if it is equal to or greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 2. Results of Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Variabel	Nilai AVE	Keterangan
SMM (X)	0,647	Valid
PUD (Y)	0,758	Valid
BAW (Z)	0,689	Valid

Noted: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Based on table 2. above, it shows the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results with a value for each variable of more than 0.50, which means the value is valid and meets the AVE requirements.

Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity is a measurement used to determine whether the indicators of one variable are different from those of other variables (Lumba, 2019). The value of discriminant validity can be seen from the cross-loading values. Cross-loading refers to the evaluation of discriminant validity at the indicator/item measurement level, which is considered strong if the measurement item correlates more strongly/highly with the variable it is intended to measure and has a lower correlation with other variables. Discriminant validity can be observed through the cross-loading values between constructs and their indicators, where the cross-loading value should be greater than 0.7, with a threshold of 0.6 considered acceptable to proceed with the research (Hair et al., 2020).

The following are the results of the cross-loading test conducted using the SmartPLS 3 application.

Table 3. Cross Loading Results

Indicator Code	BAW (Z)	PUD (Y)	SMM (X)
BAW 1	0,847	0,726	0,553
BAW 2	0,883	0,734	0,721
BAW 3	0,808	0,733	0,462
BAW 4	0,779	0,630	0,665
PUD 1	0,736	0,834	0,697
PUD 2	0,751	0,865	0,585
PUD 3	0,734	0,892	0,577
PUD 4	0,737	0,891	0,561
SMM 1	0,457	0,436	0,705
SMM 2	0,650	0,652	0,865
SMM 3	0,611	0,562	0,858
SMM 4	0,602	0,562	0,778

Note: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
 Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Based on table 4. above, it can be concluded that the correlation between indicators and latent variables is greater than the correlation between indicators and other latent variables, this shows that the values in each construct are in accordance with the assessment and shows that the cross loading analysis does not have any discriminant validity problems.

Reliability Testing of Research Variables

Reliability testing is used to assess the consistency of an instrument used in research (Hair et al., 2020). The reliability test used is the Cronbach's Alpha method. A variable is considered reliable if it produces a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2020).

Tabel 4. Composite Reliability dan Cronbach`s Alpha

Variable	Cronbach`s Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
SMM (X)	0,816	0,879	Reliabel
PUD (Y)	0,894	0,926	Reliabel
BAW (Z)	0,849	0,898	Reliabel

Note: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Based on Table 4 above, it can be concluded that the correlation between the indicator and the latent variable is greater than the correlation between the indicator and the other latent variables. This indicates that the values for each construct are consistent with the assessment and indicate that the cross-loading analysis does not reveal any discriminant validity issues.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is accepted and declared significant if the t-statistic is >1.96 and the p-value is <0.05. However, if the t-statistic is <1.96 and the p-value is >0.05, the hypothesis is not supported or rejected (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	t- statisti c	Results
H1	SMM → PUD	0,164	2,358	Supported
H2	SMM → BAW	0,729	16,228	Supported
H3	BAW → PUD	0,730	10,789	Supported
H4	SMM → BAW → PUD	0,532	9,149	Supported

Noted: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Table 5 above shows that hypothesis 1, namely the relationship between SMM and PUD, has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.164$; t-statistic = 2.358; $p = 0.019$). Hypothesis 2, namely the relationship between SMM and BAW, has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.729$; t-statistic = 16.228; $p = 0.000$). Hypothesis 3, the relationship between BAW and PUD, has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.730$; t-statistic = 10.789; $p = 0.000$). Hypothesis 4: BAW positively and significantly mediates the relationship between SMM and PUD ($\beta = 0.532$; t-statistic = 9.149; $p = 0.000$).

R-Square

The R-Square criteria are 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, indicating a strong, moderate, and weak model (Hair et al., 2020). The R-square value for variable Y is 0.735, thus indicating a strong model.

Q-Square

A Q-Square value >0 indicates a good observation value and indicates the model has predictive relevance. A Q-Square value <0 indicates a poor observation value and indicates the model lacks predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 6. Q-Square

Indicator Code	Q-Square
BAW	0,353
PUD	0,546

Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Table 6 above shows that the Q-Square value is >0 , thus, this study can be said to have good observational value and demonstrates the model's predictive relevance.

F-Square

The F-Square value is used to determine the magnitude of the influence of one variable on another if the influence is significant. The F-Square assessment criteria are ≥ 0.02 , ≥ 0.15 , and ≥ 0.35 , with each criterion being low, medium, and high (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 7. F-Square

Indicator Code	BAW	PUD
SMM	1,133	0,047
BAW		0,942
PUD		

Noted: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.

Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Table 7 above shows that the F-square value for the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions has a low influence, while the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness has a high influence, and the relationship between brand awareness and purchasing decisions has a high influence.

Mediation Testing

In the mediation effect, a variable can be considered a mediator and is declared significant if the t-statistic is >1.96 and the p-value is <0.05 . However, if the t-statistic is <1.96 and the p-value is >0.05 , the hypothesis is rejected (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 8. Mediation Test

Path	Direct Effect		Indirect Effect		Results	
	β	<i>t-statistic</i>	item	β		<i>t-statistic</i>
SMM → PUD	0,164	2,358	BAW	0,532	9,149	Partial Mediation

Noted: SMM= Social Media Marketing, BAW= Brand Awareness, PUD= Purchasing Decision.
Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

Table 8 above shows that SMM with the mediating variable BAW has a significant direct impact on PUD ($\beta = 0.164$; t -statistic = 2.358; $p = 0.019$). The indirect effect of SMM on PUD is significant ($\beta = 0.532$; t -statistic = 9.149; $p = 0.000$). Thus, BAW successfully partially mediates the relationship between SMM and PUD.

Discussion

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchasing Decision

The results of the study show that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products ($\beta = 0.164$; $t = 2.358$; $p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that the more effective the social media marketing strategy implemented, the greater the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase. This result is consistent with the studies of Haudi et al. (2022) and Nofal et al. (2020), which emphasize that social media serves as a strategic channel to influence purchasing decisions by providing more transparent two-way interactions and building consumer trust (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019; Aji et al., 2020).

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

This study found that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.729$; $t = 16.228$; $p < 0.001$). This means that consistent, relevant, and easily shareable content on social media is effective in increasing consumer brand awareness of Scarlett Whitening. This result is consistent with the findings of Aljumah et al. (2023) and Dini & Abdurrahman (2023), which explain that social media platforms can expand brand reach and create brand recall through repeated content exposure (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020).

The Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchasing Decision

The study's findings also confirm that brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions ($\beta = 0.730$; $t = 10.789$; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the level of consumer awareness of a brand can shape positive perceptions and increase purchase intention (Supiyandi et al., 2022). Keller (2001) states that brand awareness enables consumers to recognize and recall a brand, which in turn drives purchasing behavior. This finding supports the study by Andreani et al. (2021), which found that high brand awareness is a key driver of purchasing decisions.

The Role of Brand Awareness as a Mediator

The mediation analysis shows that brand awareness partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions ($\beta = 0.532$; $t = 9.149$; $p < 0.001$). This means that social media marketing strategies influence purchasing decisions not only directly but also indirectly through increased brand awareness. This finding is consistent with Nofal et al. (2020) and Aljumah et al. (2023), which emphasize that brand awareness is an important mediator in strengthening the influence of social media on consumer purchasing behavior.

Implications for the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The results of this study reinforce the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which states that behavioral intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Carfora et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2023). In this context, social media marketing plays a role in shaping positive attitudes and subjective norms through social interaction, while brand awareness strengthens consumers' perceived behavioral control over purchasing decisions. Thus, integrating social media marketing and brand awareness can be an effective strategy to influence purchasing behavior, particularly in the highly competitive beauty industry such as Scarlett Whitening.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the effect of social media marketing on purchasing decisions with brand awareness as a mediating variable for Scarlett Whitening products, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) perspective. The analysis results show that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, indicating that well-planned social media marketing strategies can increase consumers' purchase intentions and behaviors (Haudi et al., 2022; Nofal et al., 2020). Social media marketing also has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness, indicating that attractive, consistent, and easily shareable promotional content can enhance consumer awareness of the brand (Aljumah et al., 2023; Dini & Abdurrahman, 2023; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, confirming that strong brand recognition can strengthen consumers' positive perceptions and encourage purchase decisions (Supiyandi et al., 2022; Andreani et al., 2021; Keller, 2001). Furthermore, brand awareness partially mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions, meaning that the influence of social media marketing on purchasing decisions occurs not only directly but is also reinforced through increased brand awareness (Nofal et al., 2020; Aljumah et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this study reinforces the TPB concept, which emphasizes that consumer behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Carfora et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2023). Practically, the findings provide implications for business practitioners, particularly in the beauty industry, to strategically and sustainably utilize social media marketing while building brand awareness as a means to strengthen consumer purchasing decisions. Based on the results of this study, Scarlett Whitening is advised to continue optimizing its social media marketing strategies by prioritizing authentic, relevant, and interactive content. Two-way interaction between the

brand and consumers via social media has been proven to increase engagement and build positive brand perceptions (Aji et al., 2020; Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019). Additionally, strengthening brand awareness can be achieved through consistent creative campaigns across various platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook—for example, by leveraging visually appealing content, user testimonials, and collaborations with influencers whose image aligns with the brand (Aljumah et al., 2023; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). Given that brand awareness plays an important mediating role in the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions (Nofal et al., 2020; Supiyandi et al., 2022), the company should maintain continuous brand communication to build strong emotional connections and long-term consumer loyalty. The frequency of content uploads should also be managed proportionally to maintain brand visibility without causing audience fatigue, in line with Keller's (2001) view that the quality of consumer brand experience influences their positive perceptions. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample beyond university students to include a more demographically diverse consumer segment and to consider additional variables such as brand trust, perceived value, or customer engagement to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media marketing on purchasing decisions.

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