

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON MIE ENDESS
PURCHASE DECISIONS THROUGH BRAND TRUST AS A MEDIATOR AMONG
GENERATION Z CONSUMERS IN BANGKALAN REGENCY**



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Abstract

This study is motivated by the increasing use of social media among Generation Z as the main source of product information, which significantly influences purchasing behavior, particularly in the food and beverage sector. As a micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME), Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency has implemented Social Media Marketing (SMM); however, its effectiveness is highly dependent on the level of Brand Trust established. This study formulates the problem of whether Social Media Marketing directly influences Purchase Decision and whether Brand Trust mediates this relationship. This study aims to analyze the effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision with Brand Trust as a mediating variable among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess. A quantitative method was applied using purposive sampling, involving 120 respondents who had purchased Mie Endess and actively used social media. Data were collected through online questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening ethical digital marketing and trust-based strategies to enhance consumer confidence and purchasing decisions in MSMEs.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Trust, Purchase Decision, Generation Z, Mie Endess

INTRODUCTION

The culinary industry in Indonesia has grown rapidly, particularly in the ready-to-eat food sector dominated by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) (Hafidzal, 2022). Noodles are one of the most widely consumed food products due to their affordability, convenience, and diverse variations. Indonesia is currently the second-largest consumer of instant noodles in the world after China (World Instant Noodles Association, 2024), reflecting substantial market opportunities for MSMEs to develop competitive noodle-based culinary products.

Alongside this growth, digitalization has significantly reshaped consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z, who are strongly influenced by digital platforms. Social media is no longer used merely for communication but has become a primary channel for information search, product evaluation, and purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). In Indonesia, the scale of this influence is evident, with more than 170 million active social media users reported in 2024 (We Are Social, 2024), positioning social media marketing as a crucial strategy for business sustainability.

Previous empirical studies generally report that social media marketing contributes positively to purchase decisions by increasing consumer engagement and brand exposure (Ardianti et al., 2024; Saputri & Lestari, 2023). However, emerging evidence suggests that high engagement levels do not necessarily translate into sales performance, a condition known as *engagement without conversion* (Elvira, 2022). This indicates that social media interaction alone may be insufficient to drive consumer commitment, and therefore, additional psychological or relational factors should be considered.

Brand trust has been widely recognized as a key determinant of consumer behavior, particularly in reducing perceived risk and strengthening purchase intentions in digital environments (Wibowo et al., 2022). Nevertheless, most existing studies treat brand trust as an independent variable rather than systematically examining its mediating role in the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions. More importantly, the majority of prior research concentrates on large corporations and samples collected from urban populations, leaving MSMEs and non-metropolitan consumers underrepresented in academic discussions. As a result, there is limited understanding of whether theoretical conclusions drawn from large-scale enterprises can be generalized to local MSMEs operating in semi-urban or rural contexts.

In practice, this gap is evident in the case of Mie Endess, a local MSME in Bangkalan Regency that has actively utilized Instagram and TikTok for marketing communication. Despite maintaining intensive promotional efforts, the company recorded an 18% decline in sales in the first quarter of 2024, based on internal data. This phenomenon suggests that social media visibility alone does not guarantee purchase conversion when brand trust is insufficiently developed.

Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in the lack of empirical evidence on: (1) the mediating effect of brand trust between social media marketing and purchase decisions, (2) the behavioral dynamics of Generation Z consumers in non-metropolitan areas, and (3) the application of structural modeling methods in the MSME context in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies, this research adopts Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine both direct and indirect relationships within a local business setting.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of social media marketing on purchase decisions through brand trust among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency. This research is expected to strengthen empirical evidence in digital marketing literature within MSMEs and offer practical insights for businesses in building trust-based marketing strategies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years, the rapid development of digital platforms has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers, particularly through social media marketing. In the contemporary marketing environment, social media is no longer merely a communication channel but has evolved into a strategic tool that shapes consumer perception, trust formation, and purchasing behavior. This transformation has encouraged scholars to focus on how digital interaction influences consumer psychology, engagement, and decision-making processes.

The concept of social media marketing has been widely discussed in the literature as a multidimensional construct encompassing entertainment, interaction, customization, trendiness, and electronic word of mouth (Kim & Ko, 2012). These elements collectively influence how consumers develop an emotional connection with brands. Harrigan et al. (2017) argue that interactive engagement on social media strengthens the relational bond between consumers and brands by fostering dialogue and participation. In the culinary industry, where competition is high and product differentiation is limited, social media campaigns serve as an essential medium for enhancing visibility and influencing brand preference.

Several empirical studies confirm the effectiveness of social media marketing in improving consumer behavioral outcomes. Kurniawati and Ariyanti (2018) reported that digital interactions significantly increase customer brand engagement, which directly contributes to stronger purchase intention. Similarly, Adiwijaya and Pertiwi (2021) demonstrated that interactive social media communication increases promotional effectiveness by fostering emotional involvement. These findings indicate that consumers perceive social media not only as an information source but also as a determinant of product evaluation and brand choice.

Brand trust has emerged as a central construct in digital marketing research. It reflects consumers' belief in the reliability, credibility, and integrity of a brand. According to Hiatt et al. (2019), trust plays a fundamental role in relationship marketing as it determines the sustainability of business-consumer relationships. In digital environments, trust develops not only from product performance but also from online interaction quality, content transparency, and customer engagement. Djafarova and Bowes (2021) emphasize that social media influencers significantly contribute to trust formation through perceived authenticity and credibility. Similarly, Sharma and Sheth (2022) state that trust in the digital era is cultivated through continuous engagement rather than transactional communication. In the Indonesian context, Wibowo and Ariyanti (2020) found that trust positively influences customer loyalty and purchase intention. Yusuf and Susanti (2021) further demonstrate that trust plays a stronger role in small enterprises where consumers rely more on perceived credibility due to limited brand exposure.

Purchase decision represents the final stage of consumer evaluation in determining whether to purchase a product. Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that consumer decisions are influenced by cultural, psychological, and situational factors. For Generation Z, digital exposure becomes a primary stimulus shaping purchasing behavior. Online reviews and influencer endorsements significantly reduce uncertainty and accelerate purchase confidence (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

In Indonesia's culinary industry, Montolalu et al. (2019) found that emotional branding and social media exposure influence purchase decisions by increasing familiarity and perceived value. These findings show that digital representation increasingly determines purchasing action in contemporary markets. The relationship between social media marketing and purchase decision has been supported in numerous studies. Gshayyish (2020) proved that social media advertising significantly increases purchasing likelihood. Likewise, Hanaysha (2018) showed that entertaining and interactive content positively affects consumer decisions, particularly in fast-food markets.

These studies suggest that effective social media strategies enhance both emotional involvement and behavioral response. Furthermore, the impact of social media marketing on brand trust has also been documented. Prasetyo and Andika (2020) argue that transparency and credibility in digital communication play a significant role in trust development. Nurhaliza and Prasetyo (2022) confirm that Generation Z heavily relies on online content quality in evaluating brand reliability. Loureiro et al. (2018) further note that emotional branding through digital platforms encourages trust development, which in turn shapes consumer loyalty.

Brand trust has also been widely recognized as a mediating variable in marketing research. Salman and Prasetyo (2021) prove that trust mediates the influence of social media marketing on purchasing behavior. Gökerik (2020) confirms that trust also mediates repurchase intention in e-commerce environments. In the culinary sector, Ardianti et al. (2022) provide evidence that brand trust functions as a key psychological mechanism that transforms marketing exposure into purchasing behavior. Despite extensive research on social media marketing and consumer behavior, empirical research integrating brand trust as a mediating variable in the context of local culinary businesses remains limited. Most studies focus on metropolitan areas or national-scale industries, while regional markets receive less scholarly attention. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions mediated by brand trust among Generation Z consumers in Bangkalan Regency, focusing on the local brand *Mie Endess*.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with descriptive and explanatory designs to examine the effect of social media marketing on purchase decisions, with brand trust as a mediating variable among *Mie Endess* consumers in Bangkalan Regency. Guided by a positivistic paradigm (Sugiyono, 2020), data were collected via a survey of 120 purposively sampled Generation Z consumers aged 18–30 who had purchased *Mie Endess* and actively used Instagram or TikTok (Laloan, 2024).

A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used, and measurement items were adapted from validated instruments. Validity was tested through convergent and

discriminant analyses (loading factor and AVE), and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with a threshold of 0.70 (Ardan et al., 2024). Data analysis employed SEM-PLS via SmartPLS 3.0 to test direct and indirect relationships, with bootstrapping for hypothesis testing and mediating effect assessment (Putri et al., 2024). Findings highlighted statistically significant relationships and practical implications for enhancing digital marketing strategies in culinary SMEs (Fadillah & Listiawan, 2024).

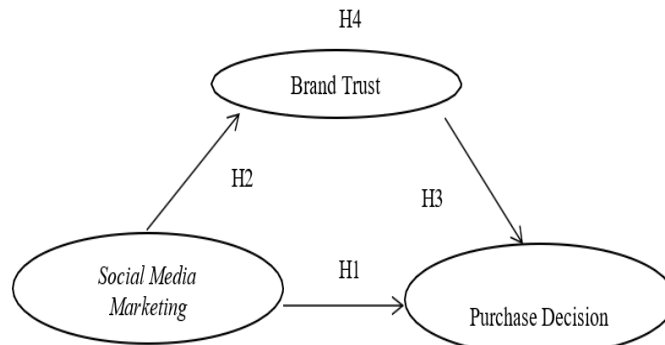
Research Hypothesis

This study aims to analyze the influence of social media marketing on purchase decision with brand trust as a mediating variable among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency. Based on the literature review, theoretical foundation, and conceptual framework, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency.
- H2: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency.
- H3: Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency.
- H4: Brand trust mediates the effect of social media marketing on purchase decision among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess in Bangkalan Regency

Research Model

This research model describes the relationship between independent variables to dependent variables. This model can be illustrated as follows:



The image of the model of this study illustrates that Social Media Marketing has both direct and indirect relationships with Purchase Decision, mediated by Brand Trust. This study employs a quantitative approach with a survey method, where data is collected using a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale. The data analysis technique applied is multiple linear regression and mediation analysis to examine the effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision, both directly and through Brand Trust. The results of this study are expected to provide practical insights for businesses, particularly in the food and beverage industry, to enhance brand trust and consumer purchase intentions by optimizing social media strategies and interactive consumer engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the research results obtained from the analysis using PLS-SEM, namely:

Table 1.
Outer Loading

	Social Media Marketing (X)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Brand Trust (Z)
X.1	0,764		
X.2	0,714		
X.3	0,773		
X.4	0,714		
Y.1		0,771	
Y.2		0,716	
Y.3		0,764	
Y.4		0,742	
Y.5		0,722	
Z.1			0,801
Z.2			0,807
Z.3			0,772

Source: Data processed (2025)

The results in Table 1 indicate that all reflective indicators of Social Media Marketing, Brand Trust, and Purchase Decision achieved outer loading values above 0.70, confirming satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021). The loading values ranged from 0.714 to 0.773 for Social Media Marketing, 0.716 to 0.771 for Purchase Decision, and 0.772 to 0.807 for Brand Trust, with the highest value observed for indicator Z.2 and the lowest for indicators X.2 and Y.2. These results demonstrate that the measurement model adequately represents the theoretical constructs and provides a strong foundation for further analysis of the mediating role of Brand Trust in the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers in Bangkalan Regency.

Table 2.
Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Media Marketing (X)	0,728	0,727	0,830	0,550
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,797	0,798	0,861	0,553
Brand Trust (Z)	0,709	0,718	0,836	0,630

Source: Data processed (2025)

The reliability of the constructs was assessed using composite reliability, with values exceeding 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). As shown in Table 2, all constructs in this study—Brand Trust, Purchase Decision, and Social Media Marketing—demonstrated strong reliability. Brand Trust achieved a composite reliability value of 0.836, supported by Cronbach’s alpha of 0.709 and rho_A of 0.718, indicating good stability of measurement. Purchase Decision recorded the highest composite reliability score at 0.861, while Social Media Marketing showed a value of 0.830. These results confirm that the measurement instruments consistently and reliably captured the intended constructs and are suitable for further structural analysis.

Table 3.
Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,094	0,094
d ULS	0,687	0,687
d_G	0,252	0,252
Chi-square	170,441	170,441
NFI	0,693	0,693

Source: Data processed (2025)

A Partial Least Squares (PLS) model is considered acceptable when the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is below 0.10, indicating that the empirical data are adequately represented by the proposed model. In this study, the SRMR value exceeded the recommended threshold, suggesting that the model did not fully achieve an optimal level of goodness-of-fit. Furthermore, the Normal Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.693 indicates that the model demonstrates a moderate level of fit and remains acceptable for explanatory research purposes (Studi Pendidikan, 2022).

Table 4.
Path Coefficient (Mean, STDEV, T-Value, P-Value)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Social Media Marketing (X)-> Purchase Decision (Y)	0,505	0,510	0,118	4,283	0,000
Social Media Marketing (X) -> Brand Trust (Z)	0,570	0,580	0,092	6,117	0,000
Brand Trust (Z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0,319	0,319	0,106	3,009	0,003

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on the bootstrapping analysis shown in Table 3, all structural relationships within the proposed research model exhibit positive and statistically significant effects. Hypothesis testing was conducted by evaluating the T-statistics and P-values obtained from

SmartPLS version 3.0. Following the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2021), a hypothesis is considered supported when the T-value exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 5.
Specific Indirect Effects (mean, STDEV, T-Value, P-Value)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
<i>Social Media Marketing (X) -> Brand Trust (Z) -> Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0,190	0,190	0,072	2,633	0,009

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on Table 5, this test was conducted to evaluate the magnitude of the indirect effects among latent variables in the proposed research model. Based on the bootstrapping results presented in Table 3, the indirect relationships were found to be positive and statistically significant. The hypothesis testing yielded a T-statistic value of 2.663 and a P-value of 0.009, indicating that the mediation effect met the acceptance criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2021). Specifically, a hypothesis is supported when the T-value exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). These findings confirm the significant mediating role of Brand Trust in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision

The findings indicate that Social Media Marketing has a significant influence on purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers. This strategy enables interactive and consumer-oriented communication that aligns with digital behavioral patterns, thereby strengthening emotional connections between brands and consumers. This result is consistent with Hidayatullah and Kurniawati (2022), who found that intensive engagement through social media platforms positively shapes consumer perceptions and purchasing preferences. Among the analyzed dimensions, the entertainment component emerged as the most influential factor in determining the effectiveness of Social Media Marketing. Engaging visuals, digital storytelling, and interactive features were identified as major contributors to increased consumer attention and purchasing interest. These results suggest that marketing effectiveness is not merely determined by frequency of exposure but by content relevance and quality. This is supported by Nurhaliza and Prasetyo (2024), who emphasize that Generation Z heavily depends on social media for product information, reviews, and brand interaction prior to making purchase decisions.

Furthermore, Social Media Marketing extends beyond a promotional function and serves as a mechanism for establishing long-term relationships between brands and consumers. Two-way communication and user involvement, including comments and user-generated content, reinforce emotional attachment and encourage repurchase behavior. This finding is supported by Montolalu et al. (2024) and Rizqika and Tjiptoherijanto (2021), who underline the importance of interaction quality and consistency in building positive consumer buying behavior. Overall, these findings demonstrate that Social Media Marketing plays a strategic role in influencing purchase decisions through the enhancement of engagement,

trust, and emotional connection. Consequently, businesses are advised to prioritize interactive, authentic, and consumer-aligned content strategies to ensure sustainable digital marketing performance.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust

The results indicate that Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on Brand Trust, particularly among Generation Z consumers. Interactive, informative, and relevant digital marketing strategies enhance positive perceptions of brand credibility. The most dominant indicator was *trendiness (SMM3)*, indicating that alignment between content and consumer lifestyle strengthens trust formation (Keni, 2023).

In the case of Mie Endess, the use of Instagram and TikTok through visual storytelling, influencer collaborations, and active interaction creates positive digital experiences and reinforces brand authenticity. In addition, user-generated content such as reviews and testimonials further strengthens brand trust. These findings are consistent with Wahyuningtyas and Astuti (2022) and Rahmawati et al. (2023), who emphasize that transparent and engagement-based social media communication effectively builds Brand Trust.

The Effect of Brand Trust on Purchase Decision

The findings indicate that brand trust has a significant effect on purchase decision among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess. Brand trust is established through positive consumer experiences, including perceived product quality, communication credibility, and consistent fulfillment of brand promises. When consumers perceive a brand as reliable and responsible, they are more inclined to engage in repeat purchases and recommend the product to others.

The most influential indicator forming brand trust is benevolence (Z2), which reflects consumers' belief that Mie Endess acts in their best interests and consistently delivers on its commitments. This trust is further reinforced through continuous engagement on social media platforms, timely responses to customer inquiries, and transparent communication practices. Consistent with the findings of Natasha et al. (2025), effective brand communication and integrity play a vital role in strengthening consumer trust and purchase intention. Moreover, these results support previous studies conducted by Wahyuni and Amelia (2022) and Chinomona (2021), which confirm that brand trust is a key determinant of consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in digitally oriented markets. Therefore, reinforcing brand trust should be regarded as a strategic priority for Mie Endess to enhance customer loyalty and maintain long-term business sustainability.

The Mediating Effect of Brand Trust on the Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision

The results of this study indicate that brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decision among Generation Z consumers of Mie Endess. Social media marketing not only enhances brand visibility but also plays a critical role in establishing consumer trust, which ultimately stimulates purchasing behavior. In the context of Generation Z, brand trust represents a decisive factor in transforming marketing exposure into concrete purchase decisions.

The findings further suggest that social media marketing alone is insufficient to directly induce purchase decisions without the presence of consumer trust. Consumers tend to evaluate brand credibility, message consistency, authenticity of content, and the degree of

interactive engagement prior to making purchasing decisions. In this study, brand credibility emerged as the strongest indicator in forming brand trust, reflecting consumers' perceptions of Mie Endess as a reliable and trustworthy brand. Such trust is continuously reinforced through consistent communication strategies and positive product experiences conveyed via digital platforms.

These results are consistent with the Hierarchy of Effects Theory, which posits that consumer decision-making evolves through a sequence of psychological stages, beginning with awareness and interest, followed by trust, and ultimately leading to purchase decisions. Social media marketing facilitates the early cognitive and affective stages, while brand trust functions as the critical intervening mechanism that converts consumer engagement into actual purchasing behavior. This finding is supported by previous studies (Chinomona, 2021; Nurdin & Ratmono, 2022), which confirm that brand trust is a fundamental mediator linking digital marketing practices with consumer purchase behavior. Accordingly, brand trust should be regarded as a strategic priority in maximizing the effectiveness of social media marketing initiatives and in fostering sustainable consumer relationships within competitive digital markets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Mie Endess, both directly and indirectly through Brand Trust as a mediating variable. These findings underscore the crucial role of social media in shaping consumer trust toward the brand, which ultimately drives purchase decisions, particularly among Generation Z, who tend to be critical, digitally savvy, and responsive to interactive marketing communications. The implications of this study suggest that companies should utilize social media not only as a promotional channel but also as a long-term strategy to build brand credibility and loyalty. Therefore, it is recommended that Mie Endess develop social media content that is consistent, relevant, and engaging, while fostering open and responsive interactions with consumers to enhance brand trust and sustainably drive purchase intentions.

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