



From Clicks to Carts: How Social Media Marketing Shapes Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention for Ventela Shoes in Indonesia

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has transformed how companies interact with consumers, particularly in the fashion industry where trends are strongly influenced by digital exposure. Although Social Media Marketing (SMM) enhances brand visibility, its effectiveness in directly driving purchase intention remains uncertain, especially for local brands such as Ventela. This study aims to analyze the effect of SMM on Purchase Intention with Brand Awareness as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 157 respondents aged 17–26 years selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that SMM has a significant effect on Brand Awareness but does not directly influence Purchase Intention. In contrast, Brand Awareness significantly affects Purchase Intention and mediates the relationship between SMM and Purchase Intention. These results indicate that social media marketing is more effective in influencing purchase intention when it first strengthens brand awareness. The study implies that companies should prioritize engaging digital content and interaction strategies to enhance brand awareness as a key pathway to influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention, Generation Z



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the marketing landscape, particularly through the widespread adoption of social media platforms. Originally developed as tools for communication and social interaction, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have evolved into strategic marketing channels that enable brands to engage directly with consumers in real time. This transformation has shifted the traditional paradigm of marketing from one-way communication to interactive and relationship-based engagement, where consumers actively participate in shaping brand perception. In this context, social media is no longer merely a promotional tool, but a critical driver of consumer awareness and behavioral intention. Indonesia represents a highly relevant setting for examining this phenomenon due to its large and digitally active population. Recent data indicate that internet penetration in Indonesia has exceeded 80% of the population, with the majority of users engaging with social media on a daily basis. Among these users, Generation Z stands out as the most dominant and active segment, spending several hours per day interacting with digital content. This demographic is characterized by high responsiveness to visual stimuli, peer influence, and online trends, making them a key target for digital marketing strategies (Kotler and Keller, 2021). As a result, understanding how social media marketing influences consumer behavior within this group has become increasingly important for both academic research and business practice.

The fashion industry, particularly footwear, has experienced significant growth within the digital marketplace. Online shopping trends reveal that fashion products are among the most frequently purchased items in e-commerce platforms, driven by their dynamic nature and

strong association with identity and lifestyle. In Indonesia, global brands such as Adidas and Nike continue to dominate consumer preferences; however, local brands like Ventela have begun to gain traction among young consumers. Ventela, a Bandung-based footwear brand established in 2017, has positioned itself as an affordable yet stylish alternative, leveraging vintage-inspired designs and accessible pricing to appeal to the youth market. Its growing presence on social media platforms demonstrates its strategic use of digital marketing to build brand visibility and consumer engagement. Despite this increasing visibility, a critical issue remains regarding the conversion of brand exposure into actual purchase intention. While Ventela has achieved substantial engagement on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, evidence suggests that high levels of awareness do not necessarily translate into a strong intention to purchase. This discrepancy highlights a fundamental challenge in digital marketing: the gap between brand awareness and consumer buying behavior. Previous studies have shown that social media marketing can influence both brand awareness and purchase intention; however, the nature and strength of these relationships remain inconsistent across different contexts.

Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention. For instance, Dindasari and Sukawati (2022) found that brand awareness significantly mediates the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention in the footwear industry. Similarly, Saputra and Wardana (2023) emphasized that brand awareness plays a crucial role in bridging marketing exposure and consumer decision-making. On the other hand, some studies indicate that social media marketing does not always have a direct impact on purchase intention, suggesting the presence of mediating variables that influence consumer behavior (Ardiansyah et al., 2020). These mixed findings indicate a research gap that requires further investigation, particularly in the context of local brands and emerging markets. From a theoretical perspective, this study is grounded in consumer behavior theory, which explains that purchasing decisions are influenced by a series of cognitive and affective processes. According to Kotler and Keller (2021), consumers do not immediately make purchase decisions upon exposure to marketing stimuli; instead, they undergo stages such as awareness, interest, evaluation, and intention. Within this framework, brand awareness represents a critical cognitive stage that determines whether a brand is recognized, recalled, and considered during the decision-making process. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the effectiveness of social media marketing in driving purchase intention depends on its ability to first establish strong brand awareness.

In the context of Generation Z, this process becomes even more complex. As digital natives, Gen Z consumers are highly selective and often rely on peer recommendations, visual content, and authenticity when evaluating brands. They are less likely to respond to traditional advertising and more influenced by interactive and engaging content. Consequently, social media marketing strategies must go beyond simple promotion and focus on creating meaningful engagement that fosters brand familiarity and trust. This highlights the importance of examining not only the direct effect of SMM on purchase intention, but also the indirect pathways through which consumer perceptions are formed. Based on the background and identified research gap, this study formulates the following research questions: (1) Does Social Media Marketing significantly influence Brand Awareness? (2) Does Social Media Marketing directly influence Purchase Intention? (3) Does Brand Awareness significantly influence Purchase Intention? and (4) Does Brand Awareness mediate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention? These questions are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the structural relationships among the key variables in this study.

Accordingly, the objectives of this research are: (1) to analyze the effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness, (2) to examine the direct effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention, (3) to evaluate the effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention, and (4) to investigate the mediating role of Brand Awareness in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention. By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which digital marketing influences consumer behavior, particularly among young consumers in Indonesia. The significance of this research lies in both its theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study extends the existing literature on digital marketing by integrating mediation analysis into the relationship between SMM and purchase intention, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of consumer decision-making processes. It also contributes to the growing body of research focusing on local brands in emerging markets, which remains relatively underexplored compared to studies on global brands. Practically, the findings of this study can provide valuable insights for marketers, particularly those managing local brands such as Ventela, in designing more effective social media strategies. By understanding the importance of brand awareness as a mediating factor, companies can optimize their content, engagement strategies, and digital campaigns to better influence consumer purchasing behavior. In conclusion, the rapid evolution of social media and its impact on consumer behavior present both opportunities and challenges for businesses. While social media marketing offers powerful tools for increasing brand visibility, its effectiveness in driving purchase intention depends on how well it builds and sustains brand awareness. Therefore, examining the interplay between these variables is essential for developing more effective and evidence-based marketing strategies in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research approach using a survey method to examine the relationships between Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention. The object of the study is Ventela shoes, with the research subjects consisting of young consumers in Indonesia. The sample includes 157 respondents aged 17–26 years, selected through purposive sampling. The criteria for selection include active use of social media for at least two hours per day and prior familiarity with the Ventela brand, ensuring that respondents are relevant to the research context. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online, utilizing a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire items were designed to measure key variables, including Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention. Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was reviewed and tested to ensure clarity and suitability for respondents, allowing for more accurate and consistent responses. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. The analysis process involved evaluating the measurement model to confirm the validity and reliability of the indicators, followed by assessing the structural model to examine the relationships between variables. Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the significance of both direct and indirect effects, including the mediating role of Brand Awareness in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 157 respondents consisting of young consumers aged 17–26 years in Indonesia who are familiar with Ventela shoes. The respondent profile is largely dominated by individuals in the 17–22 age group, with a higher proportion of female respondents. This indicates that the study reflects the behavior of digitally active young consumers who are the

primary target of social media marketing strategies. Based on instrument testing, all indicators for Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention are confirmed to be valid, as their correlation values exceed the acceptable threshold. In addition, the reliability test results show that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating that the measurement instruments are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Table 1. Results of Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE
Social Media Marketing	X.1	0.876	0.664
	X.2	0.782	
	X.3	0.859	
	X.4	0.736	
Brand Awareness	M.1	0.645	0.610
	M.2	0.845	
	M.3	0.883	
	M.4	0.726	
	M.5	0.782	
Purchase Intention	Y.1	0.884	0.755
	Y.2	0.840	
	Y.3	0.896	
	Y.4	0.855	

Table 2. Results of Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Social Media Marketing	0.829	0.887
Brand Awareness	0.836	0.885
Purchase Intention	0.892	0.925

Descriptively, the Purchase Intention variable shows a high average score, indicating that respondents have a strong tendency to purchase Ventela products. This is reflected in their willingness to prioritize the brand and recommend it to others. The Social Media Marketing variable falls within a good category, suggesting that marketing activities through social media have successfully attracted consumer attention and provided relevant information, although some respondents perceive that product details are not yet fully conveyed. Meanwhile, Brand Awareness is categorized as high, indicating that respondents are able to recognize and recall the Ventela brand, particularly through its distinctive design and consistent exposure on social media platforms. The structural analysis results show that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness. This implies that the better the implementation of social media marketing activities, the higher the level of consumer awareness toward the Ventela brand. This finding is consistent with previous studies which highlight that social media marketing plays a crucial role in building brand awareness through repeated exposure and interaction.

Table 3. Results of Path Coefficient Test

Variable	Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness		0.789	
Social Media Marketing	0.723	0.002	

However, Social Media Marketing does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Intention. This indicates that although consumers are frequently exposed to marketing content, such exposure alone is not sufficient to directly stimulate purchase intention. This finding suggests that consumers undergo a cognitive evaluation process before forming buying

intentions. In contrast, Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. This means that the higher the level of consumer awareness of the Ventela brand, the greater their intention to purchase the product. This result confirms that brand awareness is a critical factor in shaping consumer trust and preference. Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention. This indicates that Social Media Marketing influences purchase intention indirectly through the enhancement of brand awareness. In other words, social media marketing becomes more effective when it first strengthens consumer awareness, which then leads to increased purchase intention.

Table 4. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
BA -> PI	0.789	0.786	0.069	11.378	0.000
SMM -> BA	0.723	0.725	0.049	14.904	0.000
SMM -> PI	0.002	0.007	0.092	0.022	0.982

Table 5. Results of Indirect Hypothesis Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
SMM -> PI	0.570	0.571	0.066	8.639	0.000

Discussion

The results indicate that Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a significant positive effect on Brand Awareness ($\beta = 0.723$; $p < 0.001$), confirming that digital content exposure and interaction effectively enhance consumers' recognition and recall of the Ventela brand. This supports the view that social media primarily functions as a tool for building cognitive awareness rather than directly driving behavior. However, SMM does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.002$; $p = 0.982$), suggesting that exposure alone is insufficient to influence consumers' buying decisions. This reflects the multi-stage nature of consumer behavior, where individuals—especially Generation Z—require familiarity and evaluation before forming purchase intentions. In contrast, Brand Awareness shows a strong and significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.789$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers who are more familiar with the brand are more likely to intend to purchase it. This highlights the role of awareness in reducing uncertainty and strengthening consumer preference. Furthermore, Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between SMM and Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.570$; $p < 0.001$), indicating a full mediation effect. This means that SMM influences purchase intention indirectly through the formation of brand awareness.

CONCLUSION

These findings support previous research suggesting that Brand Awareness acts as a key mechanism linking marketing activities to consumer behavior. From a theoretical perspective, the results reinforce the concept that purchase decisions do not occur instantly, but rather through cognitive stages such as recognition and recall. Overall, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of Social Media Marketing lies in its ability to build Brand Awareness rather than directly driving Purchase Intention. The practical implication is that companies should focus on strategies that enhance engagement, content consistency, and brand identity on social media platforms. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations, including a relatively limited sample size and a focus on a single brand. Additionally, other variables not included in this model, such as brand trust and perceived value, may also influence purchase intention and should be considered in future research.



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