



## The Role Of Social Media Marketing In Building Brand Awareness And Brand Engagement (Empirical Study In Bittersweet By Najla Products)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of marketing through social media in building *brand awareness* and *brand engagement* towards the purchase decision of Bittersweet by Najla products. In the digital age, social media marketing is an important strategy to increase consumer visibility and engagement with brands. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method through the distribution of online questionnaires to 225 respondents who are active social media users and have experience interacting with the Bittersweet by Najla brand. Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS 3.2.9 software. The results of the study show that marketing on social media has a positive and significant effect on *brand awareness* and *brand engagement*. In addition, brand awareness and brand engagement have been proven to have a significant influence on purchase decisions. These findings confirm the importance of optimizing social media marketing strategies to increase consumer loyalty and buying interest. This research is expected to contribute to the development of literature in the field of digital marketing and become a strategic reference for business people, especially the culinary sector in designing effective marketing campaigns.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in consumer behavior, particularly in the way they interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Social media, as one of the results of digital transformation, now plays a strategic role in marketing activities. Not only as a communication channel, social media has also become an effective means to build relationships between brands and consumers in a more personal, fast, and interactive way (Azhari & Sazali, 2023). The increase in the number of social media users globally,

which is estimated to reach nearly 6 billion by 2027 (Statista, 2022), emphasizes that social media is a very potential medium in reaching consumers at large. Social *media marketing* strategies allow companies to build *brand awareness* and *brand engagement* more effectively. These two aspects are important elements in influencing consumer *purchase intention*, as consumers tend to choose brands they already know and engage emotionally (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020; Lee et al., 2019).

While numerous studies have shown that social media marketing can increase brand awareness and engagement, the results obtained are often inconsistent, depending on the type of industry, consumer culture, as well as the form of content used. This shows the need for further research to understand more deeply how the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, especially in the culinary sector in Indonesia. Bittersweet by Najla is one of the local culinary brands that actively uses social media, especially Instagram, to attract consumers' attention through aesthetically pleasing visual content, testimonial-based promotions, and trend-relevant campaigns. Although this brand has managed to build a strong presence digitally, there have not been many studies that analyze the extent to which the social media marketing strategy implemented is able to increase brand awareness, brand engagement, and consumer purchasing decisions in a measurable manner. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness and brand engagement, as well as its impact on purchasing decisions for Bittersweet by Najla products. This research is expected to contribute to the development of literature in the field of digital marketing, as well as become a strategic reference for culinary business actors in optimizing the use of social media as an effective marketing tool that is relevant to consumer characteristics in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Social Media Marketing

Marketing through social media is a strategy used by companies to reach consumers through digital platforms in an interactive, personalized, and real-time way. According to Tuten and Solomon (2017), social media marketing allows for the formation of a two-way relationship between brands and consumers, which can strengthen loyalty and encourage active engagement. The advantage of social media lies in its ability to disseminate information quickly, cost-effectively, and reach a wider audience (Putra, 2021; Rohmah et al., 2022). In Indonesia, platforms such as Instagram are one of the most effective media in reaching the market, especially among the younger generation who tend to be more active on social media (Alviera & Aulia, 2023). Visual strategies, storytelling, and digital campaigns such as giveaways and endorsements are forms of real application of social media marketing that are able to build an emotional connection between brands and audiences (Hanif, 2025).

### Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the ability of consumers to recognize or remember a brand in the context of a particular product category (Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness is an important basis in building consumer preferences, because more well-known brands tend to be preferred when consumers are faced with various choices (Keller, 2003). Social media allows companies to increase brand awareness through the delivery of visual content, product information, and two-way interactions (Alalwan & Alnsour, 2021). Content that is consistent and in line with the preferences of the target market can increase brand exposure, strengthen recall, and form positive associations with the brand in the minds of consumers (Zeqiri et al., 2024).

### Brand Engagement

Brand engagement reflects the depth of the consumer's relationship with the brand, which includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral interactions (Brodie et al., 2011). Consumers who

actively engage in brand activities on social media, such as commenting, sharing content, or following digital campaigns, show a higher level of closeness to the brand (Hollebeek, 2021). According to Kaur and Singh (2022), consumers who feel connected to brand values and identities will be more loyal and have the potential to make repeat purchases. In the context of social media, engagement can be built through interactive content, online communities, and fast and personal communication between brands and audiences (Alalwan et al., 2019).

### Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a psychological impulse that directs consumers to buy a product or service. Based on *the Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991), buying intent is influenced by attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perception of control. In the digital context, marketing activities on social media play an important role in shaping consumers' positive perceptions of brands, increasing trust, and ultimately driving purchasing decisions (Afni & Roostika, 2024). Engaging and interactive content on social media can increase consumers' perceptual and emotional value of products, thereby increasing the likelihood of a purchase (Nguyen et al., 2020; Kumar & Singh, 2021).

## METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causality research type that aims to test the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase decisions. The quantitative approach was chosen because it is able to measure the relationships between variables objectively and structurally through numerical data and statistical analysis (Waruwu et al., 2025). The population in this study is consumers in Indonesia who are active users of social media and have experience of being exposed to marketing activities of Bittersweet by Najla products.

The number of respondents collected was 225 people, in accordance with the provisions of the SEM-PLS analysis which requires a minimum of 5-10 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2019). Data was collected through the distribution of an online questionnaire using a Google Form using a 7-point Likert scale. Data analysis was carried out using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 3.2.9 software.

## RESULTS

### Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 225 respondents who met the criteria, namely active social media users who had experience with Bittersweet by Najla content. Respondents' characteristics were based on gender, age, last education, monthly expenses, and experience and duration of social media use.

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

Category Gender	Frequency	Persentase
Man	91	40,4%
Woman	134	59,6%
Category Age		
< 20 Years	7	3,1%
20-25 Years	154	68,5%
25-30 Years	54	24%
30-35 Years	9	4%
> 40 Years	1	0,4%

<b>Latest Education Categories</b>		
Elementary School	3	1,3%
High School/Equivalent	66	29,4%
Diploma/Bachelor's	142	63,1%
Magister	14	6,2%
<b>Categories Average Expenses Per Month</b>		
< Rp 2.000.000	50	22,2%
Rp 2.000.000,- Rp 5.000.000,-	107	47,6%
> Rp 5.000.000,- Rp 10.000.000,-	59	26,2%
> Rp 10.000.000	9	4%
<b>Categories of Social Media Experience</b>		
< 1 Years	6	2,7%
1-2 Years	46	20,4%
2-3 Years	69	30,7%
> 3 Years	104	46,2%
<b>Categories of Social Media Usage Duration</b>		
< 5 Hours a Week	17	7,6%
< 4 Hours Per Day	82	36,4%
> 4 Hours Per Day	118	52,4%
Weekend (Saturday/Sunday)	8	3,6%

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

The majority of respondents were women (59.6%), aged 20–25 years old (68.5%), and had a Diploma/Bachelor's education (63.1%). Most have expenses between IDR 2,000,000 – IDR 5,000,000 (47.6%) and more than 3 years of experience using social media (46.2%), as well as accessing social media for more than 4 hours per day (52.4%). This shows that the respondents are active users of social media that are relevant to the object of the study, namely Bittersweet by Najla which relies on digital marketing.

### Measurement Model: Validity and Reliability

**Table 2. The Validity Convergent and Reliability Test Result**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Item Scale</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	<b>SMM4</b>	<b>0,895</b>	<b>0,738</b>	<b>0,884</b>	<b>0,792</b>
	<b>SMM5</b>	<b>0,885</b>			
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	<b>BA2</b>	<b>0,898</b>	<b>0,866</b>	<b>0,918</b>	<b>0,789</b>
	<b>BA3</b>	<b>0,890</b>			
	<b>BA4</b>	<b>0,877</b>			
<b>Consumer Brand Engagement</b>	<b>CBE1</b>	<b>0,894</b>	<b>0,912</b>	<b>0,938</b>	<b>0,792</b>
	<b>CBE2</b>	<b>0,891</b>			
	<b>CBE3</b>	<b>0,886</b>			
	<b>CBE4</b>	<b>0,888</b>			
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	<b>PI1</b>	<b>0,909</b>	<b>0,914</b>	<b>0,939</b>	<b>0,795</b>
	<b>PI2</b>	<b>0,887</b>			
	<b>PI3</b>	<b>0,888</b>			
	<b>PI4</b>	<b>0,882</b>			

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This table shows the results of convergent validity and reliability tests using the outer loading values, Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All constructs have an outer loading value of > 0.70, a CA and CR value above 0.70, and an AVE value of > 0.50, which indicates that all indicator items are statistically valid and reliable. Thus, the research instrument has met the criteria of validity and reliability that ensure that the constructed tested can be interpreted accurately and reliably.

**Table 3. Fornell-larcker Criterion**

	Brand Awareness	Customer Brand Engagement	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness	0,888			
Customer Brand Engagement	0,775	0,890		
Purchase Intention	0,879	0,813	0,892	
Social Media Marketing	0,872	0,768	0,849	0,890

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This table displays the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker method. The square root value of AVE (on the diagonal of the table) is higher than the correlation between other constructs (off-diagonal). This proves that each construct is unique and distinguishable from each other, so that there is no overlap between the latent variables being tested.

**Structural Model Analysis**

**Table 4. The Result of the Collinearity Test**

	Brand Awareness	Customer Brand Engagement	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness			4,703	
Customer Brand Engagement			<b>2,752</b>	
Purchase Intention				
Social Media Marketing	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	4,580	

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This table displays the results of the collinearity test by looking at the value of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). All VIF scores are below the critical threshold of 5, with the highest score being 4.703. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity that can undermine the validity of the structural model. Therefore, the collinearity-free assumption is fulfilled and the model can be proceeded to the next stage.

**Table 5. The Result of R-Square**

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Awareness	0,760	0,759
Customer Brand Engagement	0,590	0,589
Purchase Intention	0,829	0,826

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This table shows the value of the determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ) which describes how much the exogenous variable explains the endogenous variable. Brand Awareness has an  $R^2$  of 0.760, Customer Brand Engagement of 0.590, and Purchase Intention of 0.829. All values are in the medium to strong category (Hair et al., 2021), which shows that the model has good predictive ability to explain these variables.

**Table 6. The Result of Q-Square**

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Brand Awareness	675,000	274,586	0,593
Customer Brand Engagement	900,000	483,087	0,463
Purchase Intention	900,000	314,622	0,650
Social Media Marketing	450,000	450,000	

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ) is used to measure the predictive relevance of the model.  $Q^2$  values for Brand Awareness (0.593), Customer Brand Engagement (0.463), and Purchase Intention (0.650) indicate strong predictive relevance. Meanwhile, the  $Q^2$  value for Social Media Marketing is 0 because it is an exogenous variable. These results indicate that the model has good predictive power over endogenous variables.

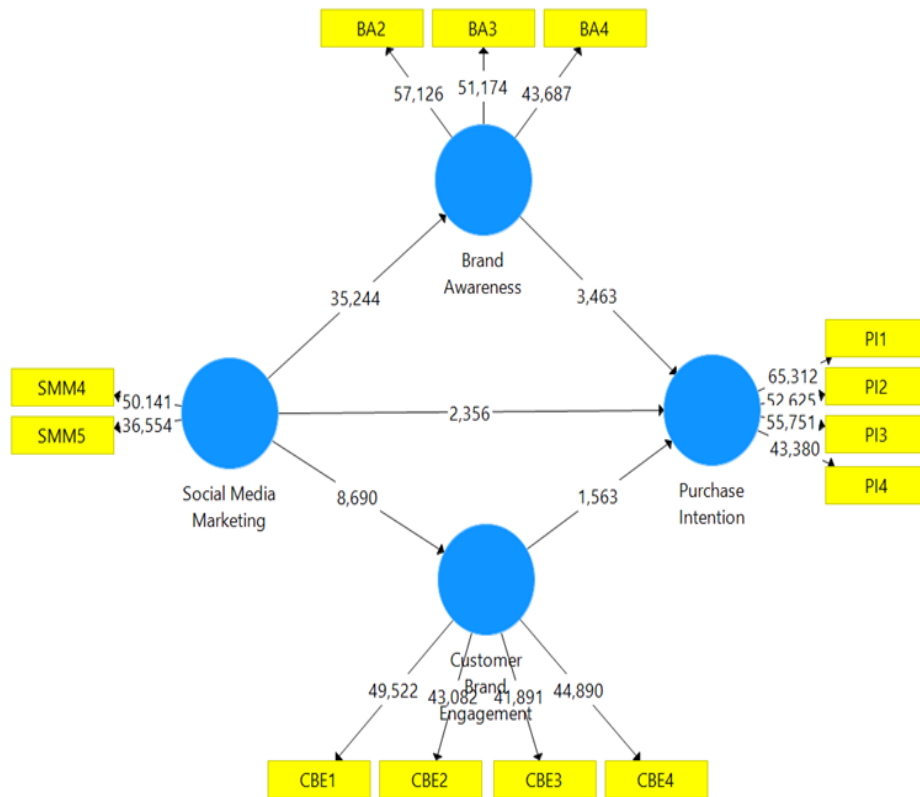
**Table 7. Estimation Result SEM**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Conclusion
SMM -> BA	0,872	0,870	0,025	35,244	<b>0,000</b>	H1 Supported
SMM -> CBE	0,768	0,772	0,088	8,690	<b>0,000</b>	H2 Supported
SMM -> PI	0,237	0,202	0,100	2,356	<b>0,019</b>	H3 Supported
CBE -> PI	0,275	0,342	0,176	1,563	<b>0,119</b>	H4 Not Supported
BA -> PI	0,460	0,425	0,133	3,463	<b>0,001</b>	H5 Supported

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This table presents the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method. Four of the five hypotheses are significantly supported (H1, H2, H3, H5) because the T values > 1.96 and P < 0.05. H4 (Customer Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention) is not supported because T = 1.563 < 1.96 and P = 0.119 > 0.05. This indicates that consumer engagement with brands is not enough to drive purchase intent. On the contrary, social media marketing and brand awareness have proven to have a big role in increasing purchase intent.

**Figure 1. Bootstrapping of the Structural Model Test**



Source: Primary data processed (2025)

This image shows the structural model along with the relationship paths between constructs based on PLS-SEM analysis. The thickness and direction of the arrow indicate the strength and direction of influence between variables. The path from Social Media Marketing to Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Engagement, and Purchase Intention looks dominant. These visual results support the findings in the model's estimation table, showing that most of the significant influence comes from marketing activities on social media.

**The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness**

This study reveals that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness. This means that the more effective the marketing strategy carried out through social media, the higher the level of consumer awareness of the Bittersweet by Najla brand. This research strengthens the view that social media is a means of disseminating information and brand recognition more quickly and efficiently.

These results are also supported by research by Zeqiri et al. (2024), which show that marketing activities through social media can directly increase brand awareness. Research conducted by Alalwan et al. (2020) also emphasized that visual and interactive content that is consistently uploaded is able to increase brand recognition and brand recall.

The characteristics of respondents, the majority of whom are 20-25 years old, namely the group who are active on social media, are also an important supporting factor. They are more easily attracted to visual content like the one Bittersweet by Najla presents on Instagram, thus increasing the likelihood of consumers recognizing and remembering the brand.

### **The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Brand Engagement**

The results of the study show that social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on customer brand engagement. This means that promotional activities carried out by Bittersweet by Najla through social media increase consumer engagement with the brand emotionally and interactively.

Consumers not only become recipients of information, but also participate in brand activities through comments, likes, and participation in digital campaigns. This research is strengthened by studies from Nuraeni et al. (2024) and Zeqir et al. (2024), which confirm that social media marketing that is relevant to consumers' interests can increase their engagement with brands.

The majority of respondents, who are aged 20-25 years old who are familiar with various social media features, have been proven to actively respond to various forms of interaction offered by Bittersweet by Najla, such as promotional content, customer testimonials, and giveaways. Thus, the social media marketing strategy implemented is able to build consumer attachment to the brand in a stronger and more personal way.

### **The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention**

This study found that social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. This means that the more often and effectively promotions are carried out through social media, the greater the tendency of consumers to have the intention to buy Bittersweet by Najla products.

This shows that social media is not only a communication channel, but also able to form positive perceptions that trigger purchase intentions. This research is in line with the results of studies by Zeqiri et al. (2024) and Nguyen et al. (2020), which show that engaging and interactive content delivered consistently can build an emotional connection with consumers, thereby increasing purchase intent.

The respondents in the study, who were mostly the younger generation, tended to rely on social media to find product information. Therefore, relevant visual content and keeping up with current culinary trends make it easier for Bittersweet by Najla to attract consumers' buying interest. Thus, the social media strategy that is implemented has proven to be effective in influencing the initial purchase decision.

### **The Influence of Customer Brand Engagement on Purchase Intention**

Different from the initial hypothesis, the results of the study show that customer brand engagement does not have a significant effect on purchase intention. Although consumers show engagement with brands through social media, those interactions are not enough to encourage them to arrive at purchase intent. This indicates that the engagement that is formed is still superficial and has not touched the emotional aspects that are able to motivate the purchase action. These results contradict some previous research, such as Zeqiri et al. (2024) and Islam et al. (2022), which found that strong engagement can build emotional closeness and trust, which ultimately drives purchase intent.

This discrepancy suggests that in the context of Bittersweet by Najla, there may be other factors that are more dominant, such as price, personal taste, or product quality. Although consumers actively follow and interact on social media, these interactions have not directly led to purchase actions. Therefore, brands need to develop engagement strategies that are more in-depth and relevant to consumer preferences to be able to have a real impact on purchase intent.

### **The Influence of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention**

The latest findings show that brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. This means that the higher the level of consumer awareness of Bittersweet by Najla, the greater their tendency to buy the product. Brand awareness is an important element in building consumer trust and confidence in the products offered. This research is strengthened by the results of the studies of Zeqiri et al. (2024) and Rahman et al. (2022), which stated that brand awareness has a significant contribution to the purchase decision-making process. In the context of this study, respondents who are active users of social media are more likely to be exposed to brand content on a regular basis, which plays a role in creating a strong brand image. Bittersweet by Najla's consistent visual presence on social media allows the brand to become more recognizable and remembered, thus positively impacting increased purchase intent. Therefore, brand awareness can be considered one of the main elements in shaping consumer purchase intent.

### **DISCUSSION**

The results of the study on 225 respondents showed that the social media marketing strategy carried out by Bittersweet by Najla had a significant influence on increasing brand awareness, brand engagement, and consumer purchase intention. Social media marketing that is visual-based, interactive, and consistent has been proven to be able to effectively introduce brands and create emotional engagement with digital audiences, especially among young women aged 17–25 who are active on social media.

These findings underscore that consumers are not only considering product information, but also digital experiences and interactions offered by brands. In this context, brand awareness and brand engagement are not only the result of digital marketing, but also important mediators that connect promotional activities with purchase decisions. In other words, the success of social media marketing lies in its ability to create strong and sustainable relationships with consumers through relevant and participatory content. All hypotheses proposed in this study were declared valid and statistically significant, which shows that each variable has a positive and influential relationship with each other.

Therefore, the main substance of this study emphasizes that in the digital era, marketing that is only informative is no longer enough but must be able to build perceptions, create emotional closeness, and encourage active consumer involvement to produce a real impact on purchase intent.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis of 225 respondents and testing the relationship between variables, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are as follows:

1. Social media marketing has a significant impact on brand awareness, where an attractive, consistent, and relevant visual content strategy has succeeded in increasing consumer recognition and recall of the Bittersweet by Najla brand.
2. Social media marketing has a positive effect on brand engagement, which is shown through the high participation of consumers in brand digital activities, such as comments, likes, and involvement in promotional campaigns, thus creating stronger emotional connections.
3. Social media marketing has a direct influence on purchase intention, where the intensity of consumer exposure to brand digital content increases interest in buying the products offered.
4. Brand engagement has a significant effect on purchase intention, meaning that consumers who feel emotionally and interactively engaged with the brand show a higher tendency to make a purchase.

5. Brand awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention, which indicates that the higher the consumer's awareness of the brand, the more likely they are to consider and decide to purchase a product.

## LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in the interpretation of the results and its application more broadly, including:

1. The object of the research was limited to one brand, namely Bittersweet by Najla, so the results of the research could not be generalized to other products in different sectors or with marketing characteristics that were not based on social media.
2. The characteristics of the respondents were focused on active social media consumers who had been exposed to Bittersweet by Najla content, so that groups who were not active on social media or did not know the brand had not been covered in the analysis, even though they were also part of the potential market.
3. Data collection was carried out online with a closed questionnaire using the Likert scale, which allows for the subjectivity bias of the respondents, for example due to the influence of personal perception, different interpretations of statement items, or the tendency to answer normatively.
4. The research variables only included social media marketing, brand awareness, brand engagement, and purchase intention, without considering other external variables such as price, product quality, or customer experience, which can also influence purchasing decisions.
5. The influence of customer brand engagement on purchase intention was found to be significant but not dominant, so it is recommended to explore additional variables such as trust, perceived value, or customer loyalty as a mediating or moderation factor in follow-up research.

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