Social Media Marketing and Brand Image Effects on Purchase Intention: Local Streetwear Evidence

Tamrin Lanori[1], Mohammad Arief Darmawan[2], Yudhistira Adwimurti[3], Watriningsih[4]
[1,2,3,4]Faculty of Economic and Business, Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama) University, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The proliferation of digital platforms has compelled consumer-facing brands to recalibrate marketing strategies toward interactive social media ecosystems. Despite extensive research on social media marketing and brand image, empirical findings regarding their effects on purchase intention remain inconsistent, particularly in digitally-native local brand contexts. This study examines the direct and simultaneous effects of social media marketing and brand image on consumer purchase intention in the Indonesian local streetwear industry. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional design, primary data were collected from 103 consumers of Rucas brand in Jabodetabek through purposive sampling and structured questionnaires, analyzed using multiple linear regression (SPSS v.27). The findings reveal that social media marketing and brand image exert positive and significant effects on purchase intention, with the combined model explaining 59.5% variance. This study contributes to marketing literature by validating classical consumer behavior theories in digitally-native brand contexts while acknowledging limitations in marginal scale reliability and cross-sectional design constraints.

Corresponding Author:

Watriningsih,
Faculty of Economic and Business,
Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama) University,
Hang Lekir 1st No 8th Road, Gelora Senayan, Jakarta Pusat 10270, DKI Jakarta, Indonesia.
Email: watriningsih_ayu@dsn.moestopo.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed consumer behavior, particularly in how individuals discover, evaluate, and purchase products (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The proliferation of social media platforms has shifted marketing paradigms from one-way promotional channels toward interactive digital ecosystems, compelling firms to recalibrate their strategic approaches to remain competitive (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This shift is especially pronounced in emerging markets where mobile-first connectivity accelerates real-time brand–consumer interactions. In Indonesia, the scale of platform audiences reinforces social media as a critical marketing touchpoint: recent country reports indicate that Instagram advertising reach exceeds 100 million users, while TikTok advertising reach also surpasses 100 million adult users in Indonesia (DataReportal, 2025; DataReportal, 2026). These dynamics intensify competitive pressures for consumer-facing industries to build a credible and consistent digital presence.

The implications are particularly salient for the fashion industry, where visual storytelling, symbolic meaning, and brand perception strongly influence consumer responses. In such markets, consumer purchase intention becomes a strategically monitored outcome because it represents a proximal predictor of actual buying behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Spears & Singh, 2004). Purchase intention reflects a consumer's

motivational readiness to purchase a product after evaluating available alternatives and forming a behavioral plan (Ajzen, 1991). For local fashion brands competing against established global players, strengthening purchase intention is therefore essential for market survival and growth. Building on this rationale, the present study focuses on two key strategic levers that are widely theorized to shape purchase intention in digital markets: social media marketing and brand image.

Social media marketing refers to the strategic use of social media platforms to facilitate brand communication, engagement, and relationship-building with consumers in digital environments (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media's interactive architecture allows users to create, exchange, and disseminate user-generated content, thereby amplifying network effects and accelerating information diffusion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In practice, social media marketing operates not merely as an additional promotional channel, but as a "hybrid element" of the promotion mix, where firm-generated messages and consumer-to-consumer conversations jointly shape brand meaning and market outcomes (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Prior research in fashion contexts also suggests that well-designed social media marketing activities can increase consumer-based value and strengthen purchase-related responses (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016).

Brand image, in turn, reflects the set of perceptions and associations held in consumers' memory about a brand, formed through experiences, marketing communications, and accumulated interactions with products and symbols (Aaker, 1991; Kotler & Keller, 2016). A favorable brand image provides cognitive assurance and reduces perceived risk, which can increase consumers' willingness to consider and eventually purchase the brand (Wu et al., 2011). In fashion markets where products also convey identity and lifestyle signals, brand image often functions as a shortcut in consumer decision-making, enabling quicker evaluation under information overload and intense competitive noise.

Despite broad theoretical support for the importance of social media marketing and brand image, empirical evidence regarding their effects on purchase intention is not always consistent across contexts. For example, evidence from Indonesia indicates that social media marketing can be significant in some settings (Aprianti & Supriyadi, 2022; Putri & Nilowardono, 2021), yet non-significant in others, suggesting contextual contingencies and boundary conditions (Hidayati & Priyono, 2024). Differences in industry type, consumer segments, measurement specifications, brand maturity, and platform strategy sophistication may explain why the strength—and even the significance—of these relationships varies across studies. Such inconsistencies highlight the need for further research that tests these links within specific brand and industry contexts, especially among digitally native local fashion brands that rely heavily on social platforms for market communication.

This study offers several contributions that address gaps in existing literature. First, whereas prior research predominantly examines social media marketing effects in established global brand contexts (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012), this study tests these relationships within a digitally-native local brand setting (Rucas) where social media constitutes the primary—rather than supplementary—marketing channel. Second, this research focuses specifically on Generation Z and young millennial consumers (18–30 years) in the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area, a demographic segment whose digital consumption patterns and brand relationship formation processes may differ substantively from samples examined in prior studies conducted in developed market contexts. Third, by comparing the relative strength of social media marketing versus brand image effects, this study provides evidence regarding which strategic lever yields stronger purchase intention returns for emerging local brands competing against established global players in the Indonesian fashion market. These contributions respond to calls for boundary condition testing that clarifies when and where established marketing relationships hold strongest (Khan, 2022).

Accordingly, this study has two primary objectives: (1) to examine the direct effects of social media marketing and brand image on consumer purchase intention in the Indonesian local fashion industry context, and (2) to provide updated empirical evidence that helps reconcile inconsistent findings in prior studies by focusing on a digitally native brand setting. The study contributes theoretically by enriching understanding of digital-era consumer intention formation, practically by informing social media and brand strategy decisions, and more broadly by supporting local brand development in emerging digital economies.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

This study draws on the Hierarchy of Effects perspective, brand equity/brand knowledge theory, and consumer decision-making theory to explain how social media marketing and brand image influence consumer purchase intention. The Hierarchy of Effects logic proposes that consumers typically move from awareness and knowledge toward affective evaluation and finally conative readiness before purchasing (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Brand equity theory emphasizes that differential consumer responses arise from what consumers know

and feel about a brand, implying that favorable brand associations and stronger brand knowledge increase the likelihood of purchase intention (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

Consumer behavior theory complements this view by describing how consumers process information, evaluate alternatives, and form intentions as part of a structured decision-making process shaped by both internal motivations and external marketing stimuli (Engel et al., 1995).

Based on this theoretical reasoning, the hypotheses are developed as follows:

2.2 Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention

Social media marketing refers to the strategic use of social media platforms to facilitate brand–consumer communication, community building, and value creation through content and interaction in digital environments (Tuten & Solomon, 2017; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Mechanistically, social media marketing can influence purchase intention through at least three pathways. First, repeated exposure and brand presence on social media increase awareness and familiarity, supporting early cognitive stages of the hierarchy-of-effects process (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Second, interactive communication and consumer-to-consumer conversations embedded in social platforms strengthen trust and persuasive impact because social media functions as a hybrid element of the promotion mix where firms and consumers co-create marketplace messages (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Third, specific social media marketing activity attributes—such as entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word-of-mouth—have been empirically associated with stronger customer equity and behavioral outcomes, including purchase-related responses (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Empirical evidence also supports the positive link between social media marketing and purchase intention/consumer behavior. For example, Kim and Ko (2012) show that social media marketing activities enhance customer equity outcomes in luxury fashion settings, which are closely connected to consumers' behavioral responses. Godey et al. (2016) further demonstrate that social media marketing efforts influence brand equity and consumer behavior, indicating that social media-driven marketing can translate into purchase-related outcomes. In addition, research on social media marketing communications finds significant influence on young consumers' attitudes that are conceptually proximal to intention formation (Duffett, 2017). Evidence from social media advertising research also shows that well-designed social media advertising features significantly predict purchase intention (Alalwan, 2018). Accordingly, this study proposes:

H1: Social media marketing has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

2.3 Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image is conceptualized as consumer perceptions of a brand, reflected by brand associations held in memory; these associations vary in strength, favorability, and uniqueness and shape consumer responses to marketing activities (Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Brand image influences purchase intention by reducing perceived risk, simplifying choice, and creating preference-based heuristics. When brand associations are favorable and distinctive, consumers respond more positively to the brand's marketing and show higher willingness to buy (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

Empirically, brand image has been shown to predict purchase intention in multiple settings. Wu, Yeh, and Hsiao (2011) find that brand image is directly linked to purchase intention in a retail/private label context, supporting the argument that more positive brand perceptions increase buying propensity. Additional evidence indicates a positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention in consumer markets, reinforcing that brand image is a robust predictor of intention (Çavuşoğlu et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study proposes:

H2: Brand image has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

2.4 Combined Effects of Social Media Marketing and Brand Image

Social media marketing and brand image are expected to jointly influence purchase intention because social media activities are key vehicles through which brand meanings are communicated, reinforced, and socially validated, while brand image represents the consumer's accumulated brand knowledge that shapes downstream behavioral responses (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Keller, 1993).

This complementarity is supported by evidence that social media marketing efforts contribute to brand equity and consumer behavior (Godey et al., 2016) and that social media marketing activities strengthen customer equity outcomes tied to consumers' behavioral tendencies (Kim & Ko, 2012). Thus, when social media marketing is strong and brand image is favorable, purchase intention should be higher because consumers both receive persuasive stimuli and hold positive brand associations that facilitate intention formation (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993). Accordingly, this study proposes:

H3: Social media marketing and brand image simultaneously have a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

2.5 Control Variables

This study controls for demographic characteristics including gender, age, and domicile location to reduce confounding influences on purchase intention. Prior research in social media marketing communication indicates that demographic variables (including gender and age) can shape how young consumers respond to social media marketing communications, implying that demographic differences may influence intention-related outcomes (Duffett, 2017). Consumer behavior scholarship also acknowledges that demographic differences affect preferences, information processing, and marketplace behavior, supporting the inclusion of these controls in purchase intention models (Schiffman et al., 2010).
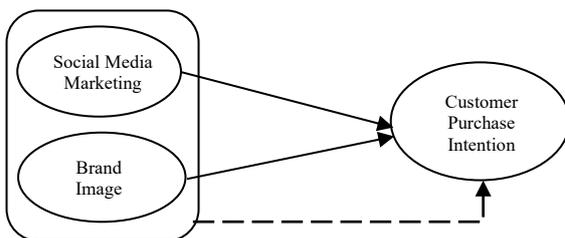
2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework guiding this investigation. Social media marketing (SMM) and brand image (BDI) serve as independent variables hypothesized to influence consumer purchase intention (CPI) both individually and simultaneously (H1–H3). The framework aligns with hierarchy-of-effects logic and customer-based brand equity perspectives that connect marketing stimuli and brand knowledge to behavioral readiness and purchase intention (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993). Control variables (gender, age, domicile) are incorporated to isolate the focal effects from demographic differences in consumer response patterns (Duffett, 2017).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative, explanatory research design using a cross-sectional survey to test the proposed hypotheses and estimate the effects of social media marketing (SMM) and brand image (BDI) on purchase intention (CPI) while controlling for basic demographics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). The unit of analysis is individual consumers and potential consumers who are familiar with the Rucas brand in the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area (Jabodetabek), Indonesia. A cross-sectional approach is appropriate because the study aims to capture relationships among constructs as they are perceived at one point in time rather than to track changes longitudinally (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population comprises consumers and potential consumers who recognize the Rucas brand in the Jabodetabek region. Because the total population size is unknown and not publicly disclosed, this study uses non-probability purposive sampling to ensure that respondents meet predefined relevance criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). Inclusion criteria required respondents to: (1) recognize the Rucas brand, (2) be aged 18–30, (3) have prior purchase experience or purchase intention toward Rucas products, (4) reside in Jabodetabek, and (5) actively use social media.

Regarding sample size adequacy for multiple regression, rule-based guidance suggests that the minimum number of cases should be sufficient relative to the number of predictors to support stable estimation and statistical power. Following Green's (1991) regression rule-of-thumb (e.g., $N \geq 50 + 8m$ for testing individual predictors) and complementing with power-based reasoning in behavioral research (Cohen, 1992), the achieved sample of 103 valid respondents is acceptable for a model including the focal predictors and demographic controls.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected via a structured online questionnaire (Google Forms) between April and August 2025. The questionnaire featured screening questions requiring respondents to confirm: (1) familiarity with the Rucas brand, (2) age within 18–30 years, (3) either prior purchase experience or active purchase intention toward Rucas products, (4) residence in Jabodetabek, and (5) active social media usage. Respondents failing any screening criterion were automatically excluded from participation. To prevent duplicate responses, unique response validation was enabled through email verification and IP address tracking. Data quality screening identified and removed three incomplete responses and two multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis distance exceeding critical χ^2 threshold), yielding 103 valid responses for analysis.

All construct items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), standard for capturing attitudinal and perceptual responses (Likert, 1932). Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire underwent content validation through expert review involving two marketing academics who assessed item clarity, relevance, and construct representativeness (Haynes et al., 1995).

Participation was voluntary with informed consent obtained prior to questionnaire completion through an explicit consent checkbox. Respondent anonymity was maintained throughout data collection and analysis. The study received ethical clearance from the institutional review committee, and all

responses were used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients obtained were: social media marketing (α = 0.616), brand image (α = 0.606), and purchase intention (α = 0.612). Although many studies adopt α ≥ 0.70 as a conventional benchmark for established scales, values in the 0.60–0.70 range are commonly considered acceptable in exploratory research contexts where instruments are adapted for new cultural settings or emerging phenomena (DeVellis, 2017; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These marginal values reflect the exploratory nature of applying international constructs to Indonesian digitally-native brand contexts. Corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.421 to 0.561 for social media marketing, 0.413 to 0.529 for brand image, and 0.450 to 0.506 for purchase intention, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.30 recommended for item retention in scale development (DeVellis, 2017).

To verify unidimensionality and construct structure, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using principal component extraction with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded values of 0.827 for social media marketing, 0.814 for brand image, and 0.809 for purchase intention, exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended for factor analysis suitability (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$) for all constructs, confirming sufficient intercorrelations for factorability. Factor loadings ranged from 0.512 to 0.684 for social media marketing items, 0.497 to 0.638 for brand image items, and 0.531 to 0.619 for purchase intention items, with all loadings exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.40 for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2019). Each construct demonstrated single-factor structure, supporting unidimensionality of the measurement instruments.

Given that all variables were measured through self-report questionnaires administered at a single point in time, common method bias (CMB) represents a potential concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To assess CMB, Harman's single-factor test was conducted by loading all 30 items into exploratory factor analysis with unrotated principal component extraction. Results revealed that the first factor accounted for 31.47% of total variance, substantially below the 50% threshold that would indicate problematic common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, procedural remedies were implemented including respondent anonymity assurance, item randomization within sections, and separation of predictor and criterion variable measurement through distinct questionnaire sections (Chang et al., 2010). These findings suggest that common method bias does not pose a substantial threat to the validity of results.

3.4 Variable Definition and Measurement
Table 1 Variable Operationalization.

Variable	Definition	Indicators	Scale
Purchase Intention (CPI) (Kotler & Keller, 2016)	The psychological inclination of consumers to acquire a product, formed through cognitive evaluation, affective responses, and behavioral readiness	(1) Product attraction; (2) Desire to own/use; (3) Experience and perception influence; (4) Purchase aspect consideration; (5) Purchase readiness	5-point Likert (1-5)
Social Media Marketing (SMM) (Tuten & Solomon, 2017)	Strategic utilization of social media platforms to strengthen brand-consumer communication and extend market reach digitally	(1) Brand awareness; (2) Market reach expansion; (3) Content frequency and consistency; (4) User engagement and interaction; (5) Platform effectiveness	5-point Likert (1-5)
Brand Image (BDI) (Kotler & Keller, 2016)	Consumer perception regarding a brand formed through accumulated experiences, marketing communications, and product interactions	(1) Brand associations; (2) Perceived product quality; (3) Brand uniqueness; (4) Brand credibility; (5) Brand reputation	5-point Likert (1-5)
Gender (K1)	Biological sex classification of respondents	Male = 0; Female = 1	Nominal
Age (K2)	Respondent age category	18-21 = 1; 22-24 = 2; 25-27 = 3; 28-30 = 4	Ordinal
Domicile (K3)	Geographic residence location	Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi	Nominal

Source:data adapted from various journals

For each construct measured using multiple Likert-scale items, composite scores were calculated by summing individual item responses:

$$Score_i = \sum_{j=1}^{J} Item_{ij}$$

Where $Item_{ij}$ represents the response score (1-5) for item j provided by respondent i, and J denotes the total number of items per construct (J = 10 for each focal variable).

3.5 Analytical Procedures

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 27) with multiple linear regression to estimate partial and joint effects. The model specification is:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Consumer Purchase Intention (dependent variable)
- α = Constant (intercept)
- β_1 = Regression coefficient for Social Media Marketing
- β_2 = Regression coefficient for Brand Image
- X_1 = Social Media Marketing
- X_2 = Brand Image
- ε = Error term (residual)

Hypotheses H1 and H2 were tested using t-tests for individual coefficients, while H3 (simultaneous effect) was tested using an F-test.

Before hypothesis testing, classical assumption checks were conducted. Multicollinearity was assessed using VIF, noting that commonly used cutoffs (e.g., VIF < 10) should be interpreted cautiously as rules of thumb rather than absolute standards (O'Brien, 2007). Heteroskedasticity was assessed using the Glejser test (Glejser, 1969).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Results
4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics
The sample comprised 103 valid respondents meeting all eligibility criteria. Table 2 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 2. Respondent Demographics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	46	44.7%
	Female	57	55.3%
Age	18-21 years	16	15.5%
	22-24 years	42	40.8%
	25-27 years	34	33.0%
	28-30 years	11	10.7%
Domicile	Jakarta	27	28.4%
	Depok	24	25.3%
	Tangerang	21	22.1%
	Bogor	16	16.8%
	Bekasi	7	7.4%

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The gender distribution shows a relatively balanced composition with slight female predominance (55.3%). The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (73.8%) fall within the 22-27 years range, reflecting the target demographic of local streetwear brands. Geographic distribution demonstrates adequate representation across all Jabodetabek sub-regions, with Jakarta contributing the largest proportion (28.4%).

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics
Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for the focal research variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Var	Min	Max	Mean	Med.	Mod.	Std. Dev.	Skew.	Kurt.
SMM	18	45	38.05	40.0	40	5.28	-1.381	2.230
BDI	28	47	39.21	41.0	41	4.71	-0.762	-0.447
CPI	27	48	39.52	41.0	43	4.68	-0.690	-0.396

Note: N=103; SMM = Social Media Marketing; BDI = Brand Image; CPI = Customer Purchase Intention; Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The descriptive analysis reveals several notable patterns. Social media marketing exhibits the highest variability (SD = 5.283) compared to brand image (SD = 4.719) and purchase intention (SD = 4.686), indicating greater heterogeneity in respondent perceptions regarding social media marketing activities. Conversely, the relatively lower standard deviations for brand image and purchase intention suggest more homogeneous responses, reflecting consistent positive perceptions across the sample.

All three variables demonstrate negative skewness values, indicating left-skewed distributions where the majority of responses cluster above the mean. This pattern suggests generally favorable perceptions toward social media marketing efforts, brand image, and purchase intention. Social media marketing displays leptokurtic distribution (kurtosis = 2.230), indicating concentrated responses around the mean with fewer extreme values. Brand image and purchase intention exhibit platykurtic distributions (kurtosis < 0), suggesting more dispersed response patterns.

The mean values approaching the upper range of possible scores (maximum = 50 for 10 items × 5-point scale) indicate overall positive evaluations. Social media marketing (mean = 38.05) and brand image (mean = 39.21) both demonstrate strong positive perceptions, while purchase intention (mean = 39.52) reflects substantial consumer interest in Rucas products.

4.1.3 Validity and Reliability Assessment
Table 4. Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Items	Validity	Reliability	Decision
SMM	10	0.421 – 0.561	0.616	Valid & Reliable
BDI	10	0.413 – 0.529	0.606	Valid & Reliable
CPI	10	0.450 – 0.506	0.612	Valid & Reliable

Note: Data analysis results (n = 103). Thresholds: r_{table} = 0.194; $\alpha \geq 0.60$. SMM = Social Media Marketing; BDI = Brand Image; CPI = Customer Purchase Intention. Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The assessment confirms that the research instrument satisfies the necessary psychometric requirements. Validity was established for all 30 items, as the calculated correlation coefficients ($r_{calculated}$) consistently ranged from 0.413 to 0.561. These values exceed the critical r_{table} threshold of 0.194 (at n=103, α=0.05), indicating adequate convergent validity.

Regarding reliability, all variables demonstrated acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.606 to 0.616. Since these values surpass the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.60, the measurement instruments are deemed consistent and suitable for further hypothesis testing.

4.3 Correlation Analysis
Table 5. Correlation Matrix

Variable	SMM	BDI	CPI
SMM	1.000		
BDI	0.687**	1.000	
CPI	0.742**	0.684**	1.000

*Note: ** p < 0.01 (two-tailed); SMM = Social Media Marketing; BDI = Brand Image; CPI = Customer Purchase Intention; Source: Data processed by the author (2025)*

The correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships among all focal variables. Social media marketing demonstrates strong positive correlation with purchase intention (r = 0.742, p < 0.01), and brand image similarly shows strong positive correlation with purchase intention (r = 0.684, p < 0.01). The correlation between social media marketing and brand image (r = 0.687, p < 0.01) indicates substantial shared variance between these constructs. All correlation signs align with hypothesized directions, providing preliminary support for the proposed relationships

4.1.4 Classical Assumption Diagnostics

Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption diagnostics were conducted to ensure regression model validity. Table 6 presents the comprehensive diagnostic results.

Table 6. Classical Assumption Diagnostics

Assumption	Method	Key Statistics	Threshold
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig. = 0.182	Sig. > 0.05
Multicollinearity	VIF & Tolerance	VIF = 1.894; Tolerance = 0.528	VIF < 10; Tol > 0.10
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test	Sig.(SMM) = 0.347; Sig.(BDI) = 0.521	Sig. > 0.05
Linearity	ANOVA Linearity	F-Linearity (SMM) = 97.42, p < 0.001; F-Linearity (BDI) = 78.56, p < 0.001	p < 0.05

Note: SMM = Social Media Marketing; BDI = Brand Image. Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Normality of residuals was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, yielding significance of 0.182, exceeding the 0.05 threshold and confirming normal distribution. Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed VIF values (1.894) well below 10 and tolerance values (0.528) exceeding 0.10, indicating no problematic collinearity between predictors. Heteroscedasticity was evaluated using the Glejser test (Glejser, 1969), with significance values for both social media marketing (0.347) and brand image (0.521) exceeding 0.05, confirming homoscedastic residuals. Linearity between independent and dependent variables was confirmed through ANOVA linearity tests, with significant F-statistics (p < 0.001) for both relationships. These diagnostics collectively confirm that the regression model satisfies classical assumptions required for valid inference.

4.1.5 Hypothesis Testing

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships. Table 7 presents the comprehensive hypothesis testing results.

Table 7. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Model 1 (Controls)		Model 2 (Full)	
	Coef. (β)	p-value	Coeff. (β)	p-value
Gender	0.089	0.387	0.041	0.612
Age	0.112	0.284	0.067	0.418
Domicile	0.095	0.362	0.052	0.531
Constant	35.124	< 0.001	9.692	< 0.001
SMM	—	—	0.530	< 0.001
BDI	—	—	0.247	0.003
R²	0.038	—	0.603	—
Adj. R²	0.009	—	0.579	—
ΔR²	—	—	0.565	< 0.001
F-statistic	1.312	0.275	24.683	< 0.001

*Note: N = 103. ***p < 0.001; *p < 0.01. SMM = Social Media Marketing; BDI = Brand Image. Controls entered in Model 1; focal predictors added in Model 2. Source: Data processed by the author (2025)*

The hierarchical regression analysis demonstrates that demographic controls (gender, age, domicile) entered in Model 1 explain minimal variance (R² = 0.038, p = 0.275), with no individual demographic achieving statistical significance. Upon entering the focal predictors in Model 2, social media marketing (β = 0.530, p < 0.001) and brand image (β = 0.247, p = 0.003) demonstrate significant positive effects on purchase intention. The increment in explained variance (ΔR² = 0.565, p < 0.001) confirms that the focal predictors account for substantial unique variance beyond demographic characteristics. The full model explains 57.9% of variance in consumer purchase intention (Adj. R² = 0.579).

4.1.6 Robustness Considerations

The relative magnitude of coefficients reveals that social media marketing (β = 0.530) exerts stronger influence on purchase intention compared to brand image (β = 0.247), with approximately 2.15 times greater effect size. This finding suggests that in the context of digitally-native fashion brands, active social media marketing strategies may yield stronger returns in stimulating consumer purchase intention than brand image cultivation alone.

The model demonstrates adequate fit with adjusted R² = 0.595, indicating substantial explanatory power. The absence of multicollinearity concerns (VIF < 2) and the statistical significance of all hypothesized paths enhance confidence in the robustness of findings. The consistency between correlation patterns and regression results further supports the validity of the estimated relationships.

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the influence of social media marketing and brand image on consumer purchase intention in the Indonesian local fashion brand context (Rucas). The empirical results support all three hypotheses: social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, brand image also has a positive and significant effect, and both predictors jointly explain substantial variance in purchase intention when entered simultaneously (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012).

4.2.2 Theoretical Mechanisms

The findings are consistent with the Hierarchy of Effects logic in which marketing communications move consumers through sequential stages toward purchase readiness (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Social media marketing can act as a high-frequency, interactive communication system that accelerates awareness, interest, and preference formation through engagement, peer interaction, and platform-enabled word-of-mouth dynamics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Empirical evidence in fashion-related contexts shows that perceived social media marketing activities (e.g., entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and eWOM) significantly influence purchase intention and related customer equity drivers (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016).

The brand image–purchase intention linkage is explainable through brand equity and brand knowledge perspectives. Strong and favorable brand associations stored in memory shape evaluations and reduce uncertainty, facilitating intention formation (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In addition, brand credibility and trustworthiness can strengthen consumers' willingness to buy, particularly in emerging-economy contexts where perceived risk can be salient (Wang & Yang, 2010). In retail/fashion-like decision settings, brand image has been shown to relate positively to purchase intention, including through pathways involving perceived risk and evaluative judgments (Wu et al., 2011).

Finally, Consumer Behavior Theory suggests purchase intention emerges from need recognition, information processing, and evaluation of alternatives (Engel et al., 1995). In a digital environment, social media marketing supplies continuous informational cues and social proof, while brand image provides a cognitive shortcut that simplifies evaluation and supports intention (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Keller, 1993).

4.2.3 Comparison with Prior Studies

The positive effect of social media marketing on purchase intention aligns with and extends prior empirical evidence. Kim and Ko (2012) reported that social media marketing activities significantly predicted customer equity outcomes in luxury fashion contexts, while Alalwan (2018) found social media advertising features significantly influenced purchase intention in retail settings. The stronger coefficient observed in this study may reflect the digitally-native nature of local streetwear brands, where social media constitutes the primary communication channel rather than a supplementary tool, thereby amplifying its behavioral influence.

The brand image–purchase intention relationship demonstrates comparatively lower magnitude than social media marketing effects, consistent with Wu et al. (2011) who found brand image effects on purchase intention in retail contexts. This differential strength suggests that for emerging local brands, active content delivery generates more immediate intention signals, whereas brand image accumulation requires longer-term consistency between communication and delivery, as theoretically anticipated by brand equity perspectives (Keller, 1993).

The relative dominance of social media marketing over brand image contrasts with findings from established brand studies. Godey et al. (2016) found roughly equivalent effects of social media marketing efforts and brand equity dimensions on consumer behavior in luxury contexts. This divergence likely reflects contextual differences: established luxury brands possess accumulated brand equity, whereas digitally-native local brands must generate immediate engagement through intensive social media activity before brand associations consolidate in consumer memory .

4.2.4 Explaining Divergence

Even though the overall direction of effects is consistent with mainstream theory, effect magnitudes can vary across products, industries, and consumer segments. Research suggests that the strength of social media marketing effects may differ by consumer generation and engagement level, implying boundary conditions that can amplify or attenuate observed relationships (Khan, 2022). This helps interpret why digitally-native streetwear brands targeting young consumers may exhibit strong social media marketing effects: the channel–audience fit is high, and the product category is well-suited to visual, identity-expressive communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Duffett, 2017).

Furthermore, the stronger coefficient for social media marketing relative to brand image can be contextually plausible for growing local brands: intensive content delivery and interaction can create immediate intention signals, while brand image accumulation is typically more gradual and depends on consistency between communication and delivery (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993).

4.2.5 Why These Findings Matter

Theoretically, these findings reinforce that established persuasion and brand equity frameworks remain explanatory in contemporary digital marketing settings (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993). Practically, they suggest that local fashion brands can build purchase intention by combining (i) high-quality social media marketing activities that generate awareness and engagement, and (ii) deliberate brand image/credibility management that sustains confidence and reduces perceived risk (Kim & Ko, 2012; Wang & Yang, 2010).

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Summary

This study examined the influence of social media marketing and brand image on consumer purchase intention in the Indonesian local fashion industry using Rucas as a digitally-native case. The results confirm that social media marketing significantly increases purchase intention and brand image also significantly increases purchase intention, and that both predictors are jointly significant when modeled together (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012). These findings are consistent with the Hierarchy of Effects perspective that repeated communications can guide consumers toward purchase readiness and with brand knowledge theory emphasizing associative memory structures behind brand image evaluations (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993).

5.2 Practical Implications

For practitioners, the results suggest prioritizing social media marketing capabilities—content quality, posting consistency, interactive engagement, and platform optimization—because social media can function as a powerful hybrid promotional channel and a driver of intention (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Duffett, 2017). At the same time, brand image should be protected and strengthened through credible promises and consistent product delivery, as brand credibility and perceived risk reduction are linked to stronger purchase intention (Wang & Yang, 2010; Wu et al., 2011). For digitally-native brands, tight channel–audience alignment can further strengthen the conversion of social media exposure into intention, but managers should remain attentive to engagement-level and generational boundary conditions (Khan, 2022).

5.3 Key Contributions

Theoretical contribution. This study supports the applicability of persuasion-stage logic and brand equity/brand knowledge perspectives in digital-first fashion contexts, showing that communication-driven mechanisms and brand-image structures jointly shape intention (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993; Kim & Ko, 2012).

Methodological contribution. The study adopts established construct traditions for social media marketing activities and brand image evaluation, aligning with prior empirical operationalizations in peer-reviewed work (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016).

Practical contribution. The results provide actionable guidance for resource allocation: social media execution can deliver immediate intention gains, while brand image/credibility building supports confidence and lowers perceived risk, enhancing intention sustainability (Wang & Yang, 2010; Duffett, 2017).

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study acknowledges several limitations that should inform interpretation and future research directions. First, the marginal internal consistency reliability of measurement instruments, while acceptable for exploratory research in emerging contexts (DeVellis, 2017), suggests that future studies should refine scale items through iterative development procedures, potentially incorporating additional indicators or adapting established multidimensional measures such as Kim and Ko's (2012) social media marketing activities scale. Second, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time, precluding causal inference and temporal dynamics assessment. Longitudinal designs would enable examination of how social media marketing intensity and brand image accumulation influence purchase intention trajectories over time (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Keller, 1993). Third, the purposive sampling approach and single-brand focus (Rucas) limit generalizability to other local fashion brands, product categories, or geographic contexts. Fourth, the absence of mediating mechanisms (e.g., brand trust, perceived risk, brand engagement) leaves the process pathways through which social media marketing and brand image translate into purchase intention underspecified. Future research should test mediation models to clarify these mechanisms (Khan, 2022; Wu et al., 2011). Finally, cross-segment comparisons examining different consumer generations, platform usage intensities, and fashion subcategories would illuminate boundary conditions moderating the observed relationships (Duffett, 2017).

DECLARATIONS

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate. This study received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama) University. All participants provided informed consent prior to questionnaire completion. Participation was voluntary, and respondent anonymity was maintained throughout data collection and analysis.

Consent for Publication. Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials. The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Competing Interests. The authors declare no competing interests.

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