

Original Article

The Influence of Social Media Marketing and Brand Familiarity on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Image among Generation Z Consumers of Khong Guan in Ternate City

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Abstract: This research seeks to investigate the influence of digital marketing activities alongside consumers' recognition of a brand on their intention to buy. Through the mediating role of brand image among Generation Z consumers of Khong Guan in Ternate City, Indonesia. The swift advancement of digital innovation has reshaped the way consumers make purchasing decisions and encouraged heritage brands to strengthen their competitiveness through effective digital marketing strategies. This investigation utilizes the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory to examine the manner in which social media marketing and brand familiarity because environmental cues, shape consumers' psychological response evaluations, represented by brand image, which subsequently shape purchase intention. Primary data are obtained by administering a standardized survey to 129 Generation Z participants selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods. The information is processed through the application of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), demonstrating that marketing activities on social networking platforms demonstrate a favorable and statistically meaningful impact on brand image as well as purchase intention. Brand familiarity significantly influences brand image but fails to exert a statistically significant direct influence on consumers' buying intention. In addition, brand perception has a favorable impact on purchase intention and significantly serves as an intervening variable linking marketing activities through social networking platforms with consumers' buying intention and connecting brand familiarity with purchase intention. These findings highlight the substantial contribution of brand image to strengthening the effectiveness of social media marketing and brand familiarity in enhancing purchase intention toward heritage FMCG brands among Generation Z consumers.

Keywords: Brand Familiarity, Brand Image, Generation Z, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

Accelerated digital innovation has reshaped how consumers obtain information, assess products, and determine buying choices. Social media has evolved from a communication platform into an important marketing channel that enables companies to interact with consumers, increase brand visibility, and influence purchasing behavior [1]. This transformation is particularly relevant among Generation Z, defined by [2] as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. This study focuses on the adult cohort of Generation Z (18 years and above), as this age group is considered capable of independently evaluating brands and expressing purchase intentions. Khong Guan is one of Indonesia's longest-established biscuit brands, offering a wide range of biscuit products that have been distributed across the Indonesian market for decades. To remain competitive in the digital era, the company has expanded its marketing activities beyond conventional advertising by actively utilizing Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to distribute promotional campaigns, short-form videos, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content. In addition, these digital initiatives are supported by experiential marketing activities, including the establishment of the Khong Guan Biscuits House at KidZania, participation in the Jakarta Fair (Pekan Raya Jakarta), and the operation of Khong Guan Mart outlets in several cities across Java [3].

Despite these marketing efforts, Khong Guan's Top Brand Index fluctuated from 8.40% in 2021 to 7.50% in 2025, indicating increasing competitive pressure within the biscuit industry [4]. This trend suggests that maintaining brand recognition alone may no longer be sufficient to encourage consumers' purchase intention. Instead, companies are expected to strengthen consumers' perceptions of the brand through effective marketing activities while responding to increasingly selective consumer behavior in the digital era [5]. Earlier research indicates that social media marketing enhances consumers' intention to purchase products.[6]. Brand familiarity has also been recognized as an important factor that helps consumers evaluate brands through accumulated knowledge and previous experiences [7]. However, findings concerning the influence of brand familiarity on the development of purchase intention are still limited inconsistent. While [8] reported a significant positive relationship, [9] found



that familiarity alone does not necessarily encourage purchase intentions. In addition, brand image has been identified as an important determinant of purchase intention as favorable brand perceptions strengthen consumers' confidence and willingness to purchase products [10].

Despite these findings, empirical studies that simultaneously examine integrated investigations covering digital social platform promotion, consumers' recognition of a brand, brand perception, and buying intention within one conceptual model are still scarce, especially in the context of long-established FMCG brands. Given the substantial presence of Generation Z in Ternate City [11], this study investigates how digital social platform promotion and consumers' recognition of a brand influence buying intention through brand perception of Khong Guan in a regional market context.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) *Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR)*

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model introduced by Mehrabian and Russell [12] explains consumer behavior as a process in which external stimuli shape individuals' psychological conditions that eventually lead to observable behavioral outcomes. Within this perspective, stimuli refer to environmental cues received by consumers, the organism represents internal cognitive and affective evaluations, and the response reflects the resulting behavioral intention or action.

In the context in the present research, social media marketing and brand familiarity function as external stimuli. because they provide information and experiences that shape consumers' perceptions of a brand. Brand image represents the organism component as it reflects consumers' internal evaluation of the brand, while purchase intention represents the response component as the behavioral outcome of that evaluation. Therefore, the SOR framework provides a theoretical foundation for explaining how promotional activities on social networking platforms and consumers' recognition of a brand influence buying intention through the mediating role of brand image.

B) *Social Media Marketing*

Social media marketing refers to a firm's marketing activities conducted through social networking platforms to inform, entertain, and engage consumers while building and maintaining relationships with them [13]. It enables firms to communicate brand-related information and interact with consumers, influencing their perceptions and responses toward a brand.

C) *Brand Familiarity*

Brand familiarity describes the level of consumers' accumulated direct and indirect exposure to a brand that determines the structure of brand-related knowledge stored in memory [7]. It reflects consumers' subjective sense of how well they know a brand based on accumulated exposure, product knowledge, and previous experiences.

D) *Brand Image*

Brand image refers to the comprehensive set of perceptions, evaluations, and mental associations formed by consumers toward a brand. It reflects how consumers perceive a brand after integrating various experiences, marketing communications, and other sources of information, influencing the way they evaluate and respond to the brand [14].

E) *Purchase Intention*

Purchase intention represents the probability that consumers will buy a specific product in the future. It represents a behavioral tendency that emerges from consumers' evaluation of a product's value and quality [15]. Purchase intention represents consumers' level of readiness to willing to consider and purchase a product based on their overall assessment of a brand, making it an important indicator of potential consumer behavior.

F) *Hypothesis Development*

Social media marketing encompasses promotional efforts implemented across social networking channels for engaging customers, delivering information, and encourage engagement with brands [13]. Previous studies have consistently reported that social media marketing increases consumers' willingness to purchase. [6] found that social media marketing significantly increased purchase intention among Generation Z consumers. Similar findings were reported [16] and [10], who showed that effective social media marketing activities motivate consumers to strengthen their willingness to buy products. These results indicate that consumers exposed to engaging and informative social media content tend to exhibit stronger buying intentions. Accordingly, the hypotheses below are formulated:

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

Brand familiarity reflects consumers' accumulated knowledge and experience with a brand developed through previous exposure and interactions [7]. Consumers possessing broader knowledge about a brand tend to interpret information more easily and feel more confident when evaluating products. Empirical previous research has demonstrated that familiarity with a brand contributes positively to consumers' purchase intention [8] reported a significant positive relationship between brand familiarity and purchase

intention. Similar results were found by [17] and [18], who demonstrated suggesting that individuals exhibiting greater familiarity toward a brand were more likely to express purchase intentions. Therefore, higher levels of brand familiarity are expected to increase consumers' purchase intention. Accordingly, the hypotheses presented below are formulated:

H2: Brand familiarity has a positive influence on purchase intention.

Marketing activities through social media allow companies to convey brand identity while building engagement with customers, and deliver relevant information through digital platforms [19]. Effective social media activities can shape consumers' perceptions and strengthen brand associations. Previous studies have consistently identified a statistically significant positive relationship between social media marketing and brand image. [6] and [16], found that social media marketing considerably strengthens brand image. The findings demonstrate that audiences who encounter attractive and informative social media content tend to form positive evaluations of a brand. Accordingly, the hypothesis presented below is formulated:

H3: Social media marketing has a positive influence on brand image.

Brand familiarity develops through repeated exposure and accumulated experience with a brand [20]. Greater familiarity enables consumers to form stronger and clearer associations regarding a brand's attributes and characteristics. Previous studies have shown that brand familiarity positively affects brand image. [21] and [22], reported that consumers possessing greater brand knowledge are more likely to hold more favorable perceptions of that brand. Therefore, higher brand familiarity is expected to strengthen brand image. The research advances the following hypotheses:

H4: Brand familiarity has a positive influence on brand image.

Brand image represents the combined perceptions and cognitive associations held by consumers regarding a brand[14]. A favorable brand image can increase consumers' trust toward a brand together with influence their purchasing decisions. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that brand image positively affects purchase intention. [6] and [16], found that consumers with more favorable brand perceptions tend to exhibit stronger purchase intention. Accordingly, brand image is anticipated to enhance purchase intention. Consequently, the hypotheses below are formulated:

H5: Brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention.

Empirical evidence suggests that social media marketing strengthens both brand image and purchase intention. In addition, earlier research demonstrates that brand image performs an important function in translating marketing activities into favorable consumer responses. [6] demonstrated that brand image serves as a mediating variable linking social media marketing to purchase intention. Similar evidence was reported by [16]. The findings suggest that social media marketing can strengthen purchase intention indirectly through the development of a favorable brand image. Accordingly, the subsequent hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Brand image mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

Previous studies indicate that brand familiarity contributes to the development of brand image, while brand image subsequently influences purchase intention. [21] and [22], reported a positive association between brand familiarity and brand image. Furthermore, [8] demonstrated that brand image positively influences purchase intention. These findings suggest that brand familiarity may indirectly influence purchase intention through brand image. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: Brand image mediates the relationship between brand familiarity and purchase intention.

G) Research Methods

This research adopted a quantitative methodology. Information was gathered by distributing a structured online questionnaire via Google Forms to Generation Z consumers in Ternate City. Respondents were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. To be eligible, respondents had to be at least 18 years old, familiar with Khong Guan's social media and its products. Overall, 129 valid responses met the study criteria and were analyzed. The survey instrument consisted of measurement indicators adapted from earlier research and employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Statistical analysis was conducted through the PLS-SEM approach implemented in SmartPLS 4.1. The analysis consisted of evaluating the measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity before evaluating the structural model and testing the hypotheses using the bootstrapping procedure.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	97	75%
	Male	32	25%
Age	22–25 years old	57	44%
	18–21 years old	47	36%
	26–29 years old	25	19%

Occupation	Students	80	62%
	Employed	30	23%
	Entrepreneur	15	12%
	Unemployed	4	3%
Average Expenditure	< Rp 1,000,000	28	22%
	Rp 1,000,000 – Rp 3,000,000	54	42%
	Rp 3,000,000 – Rp 5,000,000	22	17%
	> Rp 5,000,000	25	19%
	Total	129	100%

Table 2: Social Media Usage and Product Variants

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media	TikTok	96	74%
	Instagram	85	66%
	Facebook	16	12%
	X	15	12%
	YouTube	37	29%
Product Variants	Khong Guan Red Assorted Biscuits	127	98%
	Khong Guan crackers (e.g., Saltcheese Crackers and Malkist)	94	73%
	Khong Guan sandwich biscuits (e.g., Superco and Saltcheese Combo)	102	79%
	Khong Guan wafers (e.g., Classic Chocolate Wafer and Semprong Wijen)	39	30%
	Khong Guan cookies (e.g., Classic Milk Marie)	38	29%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Table 1 shows that female respondents accounted for the majority of the sample (75%), while respondents aged 22–25 years represented the largest age group (44%). Students constituted the largest occupational category (62%), reflecting the demographic profile of Generation Z consumers [11]. As shown in Table 2, TikTok and Instagram were the most frequently used social media platforms, indicating that respondents were regularly exposed to digital marketing content. Furthermore, Khong Guan Red Assorted Biscuits exhibited the highest recognition level among respondents (98%), followed by sandwich biscuits and crackers. This pattern suggests that respondents possessed substantial familiarity with the Khong Guan brand, providing a relevant context for examining the impact of social media promotion and consumer recognition of the brand on buying intention.

A) Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Table 3: Initial Outer Loading Output and AVE

Items	(X1) SMM	(X2) BF	(Y) PI	(Z) BI	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BF1		0.697			0.531
BF2		0.692			
BF3		0.723			
BF4		0.786			
BF5		0.742			
BI1				0.692	0.518
BI2				0.716	
BI3				0.718	
BI4				0.751	
BI5				0.720	
PI1			0.683		0.526
PI2			0.717		
PI3			0.756		
PI4			0.729		
PI5			0.740		
SMM1	0.759				0.600
SMM2	0.725				
SMM3	0.801				
SMM4	0.796				
SMM5	0.790				

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS 4.1

Table 4: Construct Reliability Results

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
(X1) SMM	0.834	0.841	0.882
(X2) BF	0.790	0.851	0.850
(Y) PI	0.775	0.779	0.847
(Z) BI	0.767	0.769	0.843

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS 4.1

The adequacy the measurement model was evaluated through convergent validity assessment together with reliability. Convergent validity was verified based on outer loading scores and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Table 3, every construct recorded AVE values exceeding the threshold value of 0.50, with results ranging from 0.518 to 0.600. Most indicators exhibited loadings above 0.70, while several indicators (BF1 = 0.697, BF2 = 0.692, BI1 = 0.692, and PI1 = 0.683) showed slightly lower values but remained within the acceptable range [23]. Therefore, all indicators were retained and considered to adequately represent their respective constructs.

The consistency of the instrument was examined through Cronbach's Alpha together with Composite Reliability values. As presented in Table 4, Cronbach's Alpha ranged from 0.767 and 0.834, while Composite Reliability values fell between 0.843 and 0.882, all above the acceptable benchmark of 0.70. These findings demonstrate adequate consistency among the indicators and verify the suitability of the measurement model for further structural analysis.

B) Inner Model (R-Square)

Table 5: R-Square Results

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
(Y) PI	0.376	0.361
(Z) BI	0.223	0.210

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS 4.1

As presented in Table 5. An R^2 coefficient of 0.223 was obtained for the brand image construct, suggesting that social media marketing together with brand familiarity account for 22.3% of the variation observed in brand image whereas the other 77.7% can be explained by variables beyond the research model, including brand trust, perceived quality, and customer experience. Meanwhile, the R Square value of the purchase intention variable is 0.376, indicating that social media marketing, brand familiarity, and brand image explain 37.6% of the variation in purchase intention, whereas the rest 62.4% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

C) Hypothesis Testing

Table 6: Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Paths	Original sample (O)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values	Results
H1	(X1) SMM-> (Y) PI	0.164	2.056	0.020	Supported
H2	(X2) BF -> (Y) PI	0.130	1.518	0.064	Not Supported
H3	(X1) SMM -> (Z) BI	0.339	4.111	0.000	Supported
H4	(X2) BF -> (Z) BI	0.276	3.158	0.001	Supported
H5	(Z) BI -> (Y) PI	0.473	4.892	0.000	Supported
H6	X1) SMM -> (Z) BI-> (Y) PI	0.160	2.970	0.001	Supported
H7	(X2) BF -> (Z) BI-> (Y) PI	0.130	2.491	0.006	Supported

Source: Data processing using SmartPLS 4.1

Based on the direct effect results presented in Table 6, social media marketing significantly influenced purchase intention ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 2.056$, $p = 0.020$). brand familiarity did not significantly influence purchase intention ($\beta = 0.130$, $t = 1.518$, $p = 0.064$), as the t-statistic was below 1.96 and the p-value exceeded 0.05. Social media marketing significantly influenced brand image ($\beta = 0.339$, $t = 4.111$, $p < 0.001$), while brand familiarity also showed a demonstrated a positive relationship that reached statistical significance with brand image ($\beta = 0.276$, $t = 3.158$, $p = 0.001$). Furthermore, brand image significantly influenced purchase intention ($\beta = 0.473$, $t = 4.892$, $p < 0.001$). Among the direct relationships, the association between brand image and purchase intention produced the highest path coefficient among the examined variables.

The indirect effect results presented in Table 6 indicate indicating that brand image played a substantial intermediary role between social media marketing and consumers' intention to buy ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 2.970$, $p = 0.001$). Brand image also exerted a significant mediating effect on the association between brand familiarity and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.130$, $t = 2.491$, $p = 0.006$). Since all indirect effects because the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the probability value was less than 0.05, the indirect effects were confirmed.

D) Discussion

The findings suggest that social media marketing strengthens purchase intention among Generation Z consumers of Khong Guan products. This result suggests that social media has become an important channel through which consumers obtain product information, evaluate brands, and develop purchasing intentions. Through informative and engaging content, social media enables brands to maintain visibility and stimulate consumers' interest in their products.

For Generation Z individuals who frequently engage with online communication channels serves not only as a source of information but also as a medium for product discovery and purchase consideration. Therefore, exposure to relevant social media content may strengthen consumers' willingness to purchase Khong Guan products. This result aligns with earlier research conducted by [6], [16], which demonstrated that social media marketing exerts a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention.

The findings also reveal that brand familiarity does not significantly influence purchase intention. This result indicates that consumers' familiarity with a brand does not necessarily translate into a stronger intention to purchase. Although respondents were generally familiar with Khong Guan brand, familiarity alone may be insufficient to encourage purchasing intention. The product variants data indicate that familiarity was concentrated on Khong Guan's flagship products, particularly Khong Guan Red Assorted Biscuits, crackers, and sandwich biscuits, while familiarity with several other categories remained relatively limited.

This result could represent the underlying attributes of Generation Z consumers, who are continuously exposed to abundant information and numerous product alternatives through digital platforms. As a result, being familiar with a brand may not be sufficient to directly stimulate purchase intention. Instead, consumers may first form evaluations and perceptions of the brand before developing purchasing intentions. This finding is consistent with [9], who suggested that familiarity does not always translate directly into purchase intention.

Additionally, the findings demonstrate that social media marketing effectively influences brand image among Generation Z consumers of Khong Guan. This result suggests that social media activities contribute to shaping how consumers perceive and evaluate the brand. Through informative, entertaining, and engaging content, social media provides opportunities for consumers to develop favorable associations and impressions toward the brand.

For Generation Z consumers, who are highly active on digital platforms, social media serves as an important source of brand-related information and experiences. Continuous exposure to brand content may therefore strengthen consumers' perceptions of Khong Guan and reinforce favorable brand associations. In the context of a heritage brand such as Khong Guan, social media may also help maintain brand visibility among younger consumers. This result aligns with earlier research by [10] and [6], which reported that social media marketing positively contributes to brand image formation.

Moreover, the results demonstrate that greater recognition of a brand enhances public perception. This suggests that consumers who are more familiar with Khong Guan tend to develop more favorable perceptions of the brand. Familiarity may enable consumers to evaluate the brand based on accumulated knowledge and prior experiences, resulting in stronger brand associations and positive evaluations. This finding is consistent with [22], who reported that brand familiarity positively contributes to brand image formation.

Likewise, the findings indicate that brand image positively affects consumers' willingness to buy. This indicates that individuals tend to form stronger buying intentions when they hold favorable perceptions of a brand. Positive perceptions may increase consumers' confidence in the brand and strengthen their willingness to consider it when making purchase decisions. For Generation Z consumers, who are exposed to numerous product alternatives and information sources, brand image serves as an important basis for evaluating brands. The findings further suggest that purchase intention is influenced more strongly by consumers' perceptions of Khong Guan than by familiarity alone. This result aligns with [10] and [6], who reported that brand image enhances purchase intention.

Subsequently, the findings indicate indicating that brand image functions as a significant intermediary between social media marketing and buying intention. The evidence implies that marketing activities affect purchasing decisions through both direct and indirect pathways, but also indirectly through the development of favorable brand perceptions. For Generation Z

consumers, social media serves as an important source of brand-related information and experiences. Consequently, social media activities may strengthen consumers' perceptions of Khong Guan, which subsequently contributes to a greater likelihood of purchasing. This outcome agrees with [6] and [24], who concluded that social media marketing affects buying intention by strengthening brand image.

Moving on, the results reveal that brand image plays a crucial intermediary role between familiarity with a brand and consumers' willingness to buy. This result suggests that familiarity alone may be insufficient to directly encourage purchase intention. Instead, familiarity appears to influence purchase intention through the development of favorable brand perceptions. Consumers who are more familiar with Khong Guan may develop stronger and more positive evaluations of the brand, which subsequently contribute to purchase intention. This finding supports [22], who reported that brand familiarity contributes to positive brand evaluations, which subsequently influence consumer behavior. The result highlights the important role of brand image in explaining how familiarity contributes to purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results demonstrate that social media marketing enhances buying intention while simultaneously improving brand image. Brand familiarity positively influences brand image, yet it has no direct impact on purchase intention. In addition, brand image enhances consumers' propensity to purchase, whereas it acts as an important intermediary connecting social media marketing and brand familiarity toward purchase intention. These results emphasize the critical contribution of brand image in explaining how marketing activities and consumer familiarity contribute to purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.

The findings highlight the importance of social media marketing together with brand image in shaping consumers' buying intention among Generation Z consumers. Therefore, Khong Guan is encouraged to continue leveraging social media not only as a communication channel but also as a strategic tool for strengthening favorable brand perceptions. Providing informative content, maintaining active communication with consumers, and creating content that encourages participation may help strengthen consumers' engagement with the brand. In addition, efforts to reinforce positive brand associations should remain a priority. Khong Guan may emphasize its product quality, heritage, and distinctive brand characteristics while simultaneously increasing the visibility of product categories beyond its flagship products. Such efforts may help consumers develop broader and more favorable perceptions of the brand, which in turn can support stronger purchase intentions.

This study was conducted among Generation Z consumers in Ternate City, with respondents predominantly consisting of students. Consequently, the results need to be understood based on the characteristics of the participants involved. Future studies are encouraged to include more diverse respondent groups and examine other contributing factors, including consumer trust toward the brand, consumer experience, perceived value, and brand relevance, to provide a broader understanding of factors influencing purchase intention.

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