Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.748 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 13 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON PURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH BRAND AWARENESS AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27417
DOI No: 10.36713/epra27417

ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine the effects of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention, with Brand Awareness serving as an intervening variable. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed, involving 100 active social media users selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth have positive and significant effects on both Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention. Furthermore, Brand Awareness significantly influences Purchase Intention and partially mediates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. These findings highlight the importance of effective digital marketing strategies and consumer reviews in enhancing brand awareness, which in turn drives consumers' purchase intention.
Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed consumer behavior in searching for information and making purchasing decisions. The emergence of social media as a primary communication platform has encouraged companies to optimize digital-based marketing strategies, particularly through social media marketing. Social media not only serves as a promotional tool but also functions as an interactive medium that enables companies to engage with consumers and build long-term relationships (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

In addition, the phenomenon of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has become a crucial factor in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Reviews, comments, and recommendations shared by other users across digital platforms are often perceived as more credible than company-generated advertising. Consequently, e-WOM has emerged as a key determinant in influencing consumers' purchase intention in the digital era (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Filieri et al., 2021).

The high intensity of marketing activities on social media and the vast amount of information circulating online have intensified competition among businesses. Not all social media marketing efforts and e-WOM activities are able to directly increase consumers' purchase intention. In many cases, consumers must first recognize and recall a brand before developing the intention to purchase its products. This highlights the importance of brand-related cognitive processes as a precursor to buying behavior in the digital environment (Li et al., 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

This is where brand awareness becomes critically important. Brand awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category. A high level of brand awareness can enhance consumers' trust and confidence in selecting a product, thereby increasing the likelihood of developing purchase intention (Keller, 2020; Foroudi et al., 2021).

A common issue is that many businesses, particularly SMEs, actively promote their products on social media and receive various forms of customer feedback, yet are unable to fully leverage these efforts to increase purchase intention. This limitation is often attributed to the suboptimal development of brand awareness in consumers' minds, meaning that marketing activities have not produced their maximum impact (Alalwan et al., 2020; Tuten & Solomon, 2021).

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Based on this phenomenon, further investigation is required to analyze how social media marketing and electronic word of mouth influence consumers' purchase intention by considering the role of brand awareness as an intervening variable. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of purchase intention in the digital era, as well as to serve as a foundation for developing more effective marketing strategies (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Ismagilova et al., 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a form of digital marketing that utilizes social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X (Twitter) to promote products or services, build relationships with consumers, and enhance brand awareness. It functions not only as a one-way communication tool but also as a two-way interactive channel that enables real-time dialogue between companies and consumers. Through this interaction, firms can better understand customer needs and foster stronger engagement (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

SMM encompasses a wide range of activities, including content creation and distribution (content marketing), user engagement, influencer collaborations, and the management of paid advertising (social media ads). One of the main advantages of SMM lies in its ability to reach a broad audience at a relatively lower cost compared to traditional media, as well as its capacity to target consumers more precisely based on demographics, interests, and behavioral patterns. These capabilities make social media marketing a highly effective tool in modern marketing strategies (Tuten & Solomon, 2021; Alalwan et al., 2020).

In addition, social media marketing is commonly assessed using several key indicators in empirical studies, including: (1) content quality, which refers to the relevance, usefulness, and attractiveness of the content delivered; (2) interaction, defined as the level of engagement between the brand and its audience; (3) entertainment, which reflects the extent to which content captures attention and provides enjoyment; (4) customization, indicating the ability to tailor content to the needs and preferences of the target market; and (5) trendiness, which represents how well the content aligns with current trends on social media platforms. These dimensions are widely used to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer responses and behaviors (Li et al., 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) refers to informal communication that occurs through electronic or digital media, where consumers share experiences, opinions, and recommendations about products or services with others. Unlike traditional word of mouth, which takes place face-to-face, e-WOM is disseminated عبر online platforms such as social media, marketplaces, discussion forums, blogs, and review websites, allowing it to reach a broader audience and remain accessible over time. As a result, e-WOM has become a highly influential source of information in consumers' decision-making processes (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Filieri et al., 2021).

Information shared by other users is often perceived as more objective, honest, and trustworthy than company-generated promotional messages. Consequently, positive reviews can enhance a brand's image, whereas negative reviews may damage brand perception and hinder purchase intention. Furthermore, e-WOM is characterized by several key dimensions, including: (1**)** credibility, referring to the level of trust in the information source; (2) quali**ty of** information, indicating clarity, completeness, and relevance; (3) quantity of reviews, reflecting the volume of available feedback; and (4) valence, which captures whether the opinions expressed are positive or negative. These dimensions are widely used as indicators to assess the effectiveness of e-WOM in marketing research (Filieri et al., 2021; Ismagilova et al., 2020).

Brand Awareness

Brand Awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recognize (recognition) and recall (recall) a brand as part of a specific product category. It is considered a fundamental element in marketing because consumers must first be aware of a brand before they can consider purchasing it. In essence, brand awareness reflects how strongly a brand is embedded in consumers' memory. The higher the level of brand awareness, the greater the likelihood that the brand will be included in consumers' consideration set during the purchase decision process (Keller, 2020; Foroudi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, brand awareness is closely associated with the concept of top of mind, which refers to a brand being the first one that comes to consumers' minds when thinking about a particular product category. There are several levels of brand awareness, including: (1) unaware of brand, where consumers are not familiar with the brand at all; (2) brand recognition, where consumers can identify the brand when given cues such as logos or packaging; (3) brand recall, where consumers can remember the brand without any assistance; and (4) top of mind, where the

brand is the first recalled among competitors. These levels indicate the strength of a brand's position in the market and its ability to influence consumer behavior (Foroudi et al., 2021; Keller, 2020).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's tendency or willingness to buy a product or service after evaluating the information available to them. It does not represent actual purchasing behavior, but it serves as a strong predictor of future buying decisions. In this sense, purchase intention reflects the likelihood that consumers will proceed to make a purchase (Ajzen, 2020; Paul & Bhakar, 2021).

Conceptually, purchase intention is part of the consumer decision-making process, which typically involves need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the formation of intention, and ultimately the purchase decision. At this stage, consumers begin to show interest, preference, and intention to choose a particular brand over others. Therefore, purchase intention is frequently used as a key variable in marketing research to predict consumer behavior (Paul & Bhakar, 2021).

Purchase intention is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include needs, motivation, perception, and consumer attitudes toward a product, while external factors encompass social influences, promotional activities, price, product quality, and information obtained from media sources, including social media marketing and electronic word of mouth. In addition, the level of brand awareness plays a crucial role, as consumers tend to exhibit higher purchase intention toward brands they recognize and trust (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Foroudi et al., 2021).

Grand Theory

This study is grounded in Consumer Behavior Theory, which posits that consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by marketing stimuli and internal psychological processes. In this context, social media marketing and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) function as external stimuli that provide information, shape perceptions, and influence consumers' attitudes toward a brand (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Ismagilova et al., 2020).

In addition, this study is supported by the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), which explains the stages of consumer responses to marketing activities. Social media marketing and e-WOM play a role in attracting attention and generating interest, which subsequently contribute to the formation of brand awareness. Brand awareness then becomes a crucial stage before consumers develop desire and ultimately take purchasing action (Li et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the Hierarchy of Effects Model provides a theoretical foundation by illustrating that consumers move through cognitive (awareness), affective (liking or preference), and conative (purchase) stages. Brand awareness represents the initial cognitive stage and serves as a prerequisite for the development of purchase intention. Therefore, it acts as an intervening variable that mediates the relationship between social media marketing, e-WOM, and purchase intention (Foroudi et al., 2021).

This study also draws on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which suggests that intention is the primary predictor of behavior. Purchase intention, as a form of intention, is influenced by attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Information obtained through social media marketing and e-WOM can shape positive attitudes and beliefs toward a brand, thereby enhancing purchase intention (Ajzen, 2020).

In summary, the grand theoretical framework of this study emphasizes that social media marketing and electronic word of mouth, as external factors, influence the development of brand awareness as a cognitive factor, which in turn affects purchase intention as a behavioral response. This highlights both direct and indirect relationships through the intervening variable in shaping consumer decision-making.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design aimed at examining causal relationships among the variables. The variables include Social Media Marketing (X1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) as independent variables, Purchase Intention (Y) as the dependent variable, and Brand Awareness (Z) as an intervening variable. The population consists of consumers who use social media and have been exposed to or interacted with online product promotions.

The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria, such as being active social media users and having obtained product-related information through digital platforms. The sample size is adjusted to the analytical method, with a minimum of 100 respondents to ensure adequate representation. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, and the measurement instrument employed a Likert scale (1–5) to capture respondents' levels of agreement with

statements related to each variable. The indicators were adapted from established marketing theories, including content, interaction, and trendiness for Social Media Marketing; credibility, quality, and quantity for e-WOM; recognition and recall for Brand Awareness; and transactional and preferential intentions for Purchase Intention (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Data analysis was conducted using path analysis through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which allows for testing both direct and indirect relationships among variables, particularly the mediating role of Brand Awareness. Prior to hypothesis testing, instrument evaluation was carried out through validity and reliability tests, along with classical assumption tests (if regression is applied), such as normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Hypothesis testing was based on significance values and path coefficients, while mediation effects were assessed using the Sobel test or bootstrapping procedures within SEM. These analyses determine whether Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth directly influence Purchase Intention and whether Brand Awareness mediates these relationships (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Operational Definitions

Operational definitions are used to explain how each variable in the study is measured empirically, including the indicators and measurement scales employed. These definitions ensure clarity and consistency in the measurement of research constructs. The operational definitions of the variables are presented in Table 1 below (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Table 1. Operational Definitions

Variable	Operational Definitions	Indicator	Scala
Social Media Marketing	Marketing activities conducted through social media platforms	Content, Interaction, Entertainment, Customization, Trendiness	Likert 1–5
Electronic Word of Mouth	Consumer reviews and recommendations shared on digital media platforms	Credibility, Quality, Quantity, Valence	Likert 1–5
Brand Awareness	The ability to recognize and recall a brand	Recognition, Recall, Top of Mind, Familiarity	Likert 1–5
Purchase Intention	Consumers' willingness or intention to purchase a product or service	Transaksional, Referensial, Preferensial, Eksploratif	Likert 1–5

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Instrument Testing

Table 2 Validity Test Results

Variabel	Indicator/Item	r-value	r Table	Description
Social Media Marketing	X1.1	0,652	0,197	Valid
	X1.2	0,701	0,197	Valid
	X1.3	0,689	0,197	Valid
	X1.4	0,734	0,197	Valid
	X1.5	0,668	0,197	Valid
Electronic Word of Mouth	X2.1	0,712	0,197	Valid
	X2.2	0,745	0,197	Valid
	X2.3	0,690	0,197	Valid
	X2.4	0,721	0,197	Valid
Brand Awareness	Z1	0,676	0,197	Valid
	Z2	0,703	0,197	Valid
	Z3	0,729	0,197	Valid
	Z4	0,688	0,197	Valid
Purchase Intention	Y1	0,741	0,197	Valid
	Y2	0,768	0,197	Valid
	Y3	0,722	0,197	Valid
	Y4	0,695	0,197	Valid

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Based on the table above, all items across each variable have a calculated r-value (r count) greater than the r-table value (0.197). Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators in this study are valid and appropriate for use as research instruments (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

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Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Standar Alpha	Description
Social Media Marketing	5	0,842	0,70	Reliabel
Electronic Word of Mouth	4	0,856	0,70	Reliabel
Brand Awareness	4	0,831	0,70	Reliabel
Purchase Intention	4	0,865	0,70	Reliabel

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Based on the table above, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research instruments are reliable and demonstrate a good level of internal consistency, making them suitable for data collection in this study (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

a. Convergent Validity (Loading Factor)

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description
Social Media Marketing	X1.1	0,781	Valid
	X1.2	0,823	Valid
	X1.3	0,798	Valid
	X1.4	0,845	Valid
	X1.5	0,776	Valid
Electronic Word of Mouth	X2.1	0,812	Valid
	X2.2	0,854	Valid
	X2.3	0,801	Valid
	X2.4	0,833	Valid
Brand Awareness	Z1	0,790	Valid
	Z2	0,821	Valid
	Z3	0,846	Valid
	Z4	0,804	Valid
Purchase Intention	Y1	0,835	Valid
	Y2	0,861	Valid
	Y3	0,824	Valid
	Y4	0,807	Valid

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

b. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Tabel 5 Average Variance Extracted

Variable	AVE	Description
X1	0,653	Valid
X2	0,689	Valid
Z	0,667	Valid
Y	0,702	Valid

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

All AVE values are greater than 0.50; therefore, the constructs are considered valid.

c. Composite Reliability & Cronbach Alpha

Tabel 6 Composite Reliability & Cronbach Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	Description
X1	0,903	0,842	Reliabel
X2	0,908	0,856	Reliabel
Z	0,889	0,831	Reliabel
Y	0,914	0,865	Reliabel

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

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2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

a. R-Square Value

Tabel 6 R-Square

Endogenous Variable	R-Square	**Description**
Brand Awareness	0,621	Kuat
Purchase Intention	0,687	Kuat

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Interpretation

X1 and X2 are able to explain 62.1% of the variation in Brand Awareness. Meanwhile, X1, X2, and Z explain 68.7% of Purchase Intention.

b. Path Coefficient (Hypothesis Testing)

Table7 Path Coefficient

Relationship	**Koefisien**	**T-Statistik**	**P-Value**	**Description**
X1 → Z	0,412	4,215	0,000	Signifikan
X2 → Z	0,395	3,978	0,000	Signifikan
X1 → Y	0,221	2,145	0,032	Signifikan
X2 → Y	0,248	2,367	0,019	Signifikan
Z → Y	0,403	4,587	0,000	Signifikan

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Criteria: T > 1.96 and P < 0.05 → significant.

c. Uji Mediasi (Indirect Effect)

Table 8. Mediation Test Results

Mediating Relationship	**Koefisien**	**T-Statistik**	**P-Value**	**Description**
X1 → Z → Y	0,166	2,987	0,003	Signifikan
X2 → Z → Y	0,159	2,854	0,004	Signifikan

Source: Primary data processed, 2026

Brand Awareness is proven to act as an intervening variable (partial mediation).

DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis indicate that Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth have a significant positive effect on both Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention. This suggests that marketing activities conducted through social media—when designed to be engaging, interactive, and trend-oriented—are effective in increasing consumers' awareness of a brand. Similarly, e-WOM, in the form of reviews, comments, and recommendations from other consumers, serves as a trusted information source that strengthens positive brand perceptions. As consumers are increasingly exposed to relevant content and information, their ability to recognize and recall the brand improves, which ultimately contributes to the formation of purchase intention (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the findings also confirm that Brand Awareness plays a significant role as an intervening variable in mediating the relationship between Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Purchase Intention. This implies that although both independent variables can directly influence purchase intention, their impact becomes stronger when mediated by increased brand awareness. Consumers tend to show higher purchase intention toward brands they recognize and remember well. Therefore, companies should not only focus on the intensity of promotional activities and information dissemination but also ensure that their marketing strategies consistently build and strengthen brand awareness over time (Foroudi et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth have a positive and significant effect on both Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention. In addition, Brand Awareness is also proven to have a significant effect on Purchase Intention, indicating that the higher the level of consumer awareness toward a brand, the greater their tendency to purchase the product (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

The findings further show that Brand Awareness functions as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention. This means that the independent variables not only have a direct effect on purchase intention, but also an indirect effect through the enhancement of brand awareness. Therefore, effective digital marketing strategies should focus on improving

content quality, increasing consumer interaction, and encouraging positive consumer reviews in order to strengthen brand awareness and ultimately enhance purchase intention (Foroudi et al., 2021).

Managerial Implications

Companies need to optimize Social Media Marketing by focusing on creating attractive, relevant, and interactive content in order to increase consumer engagement and strengthen Brand Awareness. In addition, companies should actively manage Electronic Word of Mouth by encouraging positive reviews, responding promptly to consumer comments, and maintaining high product and service quality to ensure favorable consumer perceptions.

On the other hand, improving Brand Awareness should be a top priority, as it has been proven to strengthen its influence on Purchase Intention. Therefore, companies are advised to build a consistent brand identity, increase the frequency of exposure on social media platforms, and create positive consumer experiences so that the brand is more easily recognized, remembered, and chosen by consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the sample size is relatively limited and only reflects the characteristics of specific respondents, so the findings cannot be widely generalized. Second, this study only includes four variables, namely Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention, while other potential variables such as price, product quality, and consumer trust that may also influence purchase intention were not examined.

Third, the data used are based on respondents' perceptions collected through questionnaires, which may contain subjective bias. Fourth, this study employs a cross-sectional design, meaning the data were collected at a single point in time, so it is unable to capture dynamic changes in consumer behavior over the long term. Therefore, future research is recommended to include additional variables, expand the number and scope of respondents, and apply longitudinal methods to obtain more comprehensive and accurate results.

Future Research Agenda

Future research is recommended to expand the model by adding other variables that may influence purchase intention, such as consumer trust, product quality, price, customer experience, and perceived value, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior. In addition, future studies may also examine the role of other variables as mediators or moderators, such as trust or customer loyalty, to enrich the existing conceptual framework.

From a methodological perspective, future research is encouraged to use a larger sample size and a broader geographical scope to improve the generalizability of the findings. A longitudinal approach is also recommended to observe changes in consumer behavior over time, as well as comparative studies across different sectors such as SMEs, e-commerce, or service industries. Furthermore, the use of alternative analytical methods such as Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) or a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques may provide deeper and more robust insights into the relationships among the variables.

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