

## **The Influence of Social Media Marketing And Product Quality On Purchase Intention of Pesticides With Brand Awareness As A Mediating Variable (Study On Farmer Groups In Indramayu Regency)**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of this study is to analyse the influence of social media marketing and product quality on pesticide purchase intention, with brand awareness as a mediating variable. This study was conducted among farmer groups in Indramayu Regency, considering the importance of digital marketing and product quality in influencing farmer purchasing behaviour. The research approach used was quantitative with primary data. The sampling technique used incidental sampling. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The results showed that social media marketing had no influence on brand awareness, product quality influence brand awareness, social media marketing influence purchase intention, product quality influence purchase intention, brand awareness influence purchase intention, brand awareness did not mediate the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention, and brand awareness significantly mediated the influence of product quality on purchase intention. These results imply that improving product quality is a key factor in building brand awareness and purchase intention among farmers, while social media marketing is more effective in directly driving purchase intention. This research is expected to contribute academically to the development of marketing management studies and provide practical considerations for pesticide companies in designing more effective marketing strategies.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing; Product Quality; Brand Awareness; Purchase Intention.*

### **Abstrak**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis pengaruh pemasaran media sosial dan kualitas produk terhadap niat beli pestisida, dengan kesadaran merek sebagai variabel mediasi. Penelitian ini dilakukan di kalangan kelompok petani di Kabupaten Indramayu, dengan mempertimbangkan pentingnya pemasaran digital dan kualitas produk dalam memengaruhi perilaku pembelian petani. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan data primer. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah incidental sampling. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan Structural Equation

Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) dengan bantuan perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran media sosial tidak berpengaruh terhadap kesadaran merek, kualitas produk berpengaruh terhadap kesadaran merek, pemasaran media sosial berpengaruh terhadap niat beli, kualitas produk berpengaruh terhadap niat beli, kesadaran merek berpengaruh terhadap niat beli, kesadaran merek tidak memediasi pengaruh pemasaran media sosial terhadap niat beli, dan kesadaran merek secara signifikan memediasi pengaruh kualitas produk terhadap niat beli. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kualitas produk merupakan faktor kunci dalam membangun kesadaran merek dan niat beli di kalangan petani, sementara pemasaran media sosial lebih efektif dalam mendorong niat beli secara langsung. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi akademis terhadap pengembangan studi manajemen pemasaran dan memberikan pertimbangan praktis bagi perusahaan pestisida dalam merancang strategi pemasaran yang lebih efektif.

**Kata kunci:** *Pemasaran Media Sosial; Kualitas Produk; Kesadaran Merek; Niat Beli.*

## **Introduction**

### **1. Background**

Digital transformation has positioned social media as a strategic promotional tool that significantly contributes to sales growth, a phenomenon that extends to the agricultural sector. In Indramayu Regency, a major rice-producing area, farmers exhibit high pesticide dependency, often conducting intensive spraying more than ten times per season. In this highly competitive market, purchase decisions are influenced not only by product functionality but also by brand awareness.

Previous research confirms that brand awareness plays a crucial mediating role linking marketing stimuli to purchase intention. However, a research gap exists as most prior studies focused on general consumer products such as cosmetics and food. This study addresses this gap by examining agricultural commodities specifically pesticides among farmer groups to develop strategies aligned with modern farmer behavior.

### **2. Research Questions**

Based on the background, the following research questions are formulated:

- a. Does social media marketing influence brand awareness?
- b. Does product quality influence brand awareness?
- c. Does social media marketing influence purchase intention?
- d. Does product quality influence purchase intention?
- e. Does brand awareness influence purchase intention?
- f. Does brand awareness mediate the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention?
- g. Does brand awareness mediate the influence of product quality on purchase intention?

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Main Theory and Concepts**

Digital marketing facilitates consumer relationships through "social business," leveraging online dynamics to enhance customer experiences. Funk (2014) highlights the cost efficiency of social media, noting that organic content often delivers a stronger impact than conventional advertising. Regarding product quality, Kotler & Armstrong (2018) emphasize that it extends beyond freedom from defects to include consistent performance and alignment with market expectations. Sustained quality builds brand awareness, defined by Kall (2021) as the ability to identify and recall a brand to facilitate decision-making. These factors drive purchase intention, a psychological state predicting actual transactions, which Ferdinand (2014) measures through transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory interests.

### **2. Previous Studies and Research Gap**

Previous research (e.g., Adriana et al., 2022; Winarno & Indrawati, 2022) confirms the positive impact of social media marketing on purchase intention, though primarily within general consumer sectors like cosmetics and food. Addressing this gap, this study focuses on agricultural commodities (pesticides)

among farmers in Indramayu, specifically analyzing the mediating role of brand awareness in this distinct context.

### **3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses**

H1: Social media marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness. H2: Product quality has a positive effect on brand awareness. H3: Social media marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention. H4: Product quality has a positive effect on purchase intention. H5: Brand awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention. H6: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. H7: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intention.

### **Research Method**

This study employs a quantitative approach. The population consists of farmer groups in Indramayu Regency, West Java. A total of 127 farmers were selected as respondents using incidental sampling. Primary data were collected via questionnaires using a Likert scale. Data analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0 software, evaluating both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

#### **1. Respondent Characteristics**

The majority of respondents were farmers aged over 44 years (64%), followed by 23–43 years (32%), and under 27 years (4%). This indicates that agriculture in the study area remains dominated by older generations with varying levels of technology adaptation.

#### **2. Outer Model Evaluation**

Validity and reliability tests showed that all indicators for Social Media

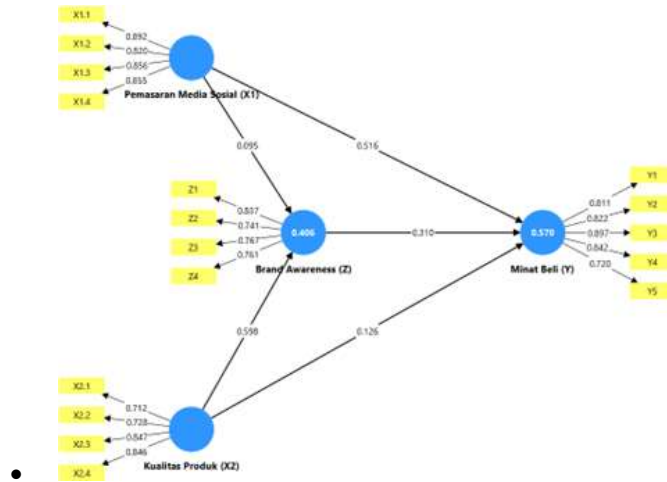
Marketing (X1), Product Quality (X2), Brand Awareness (Z), and Purchase Intention (Y) met the criteria: loading factor  $> 0.70$ , AVE  $> 0.50$ , and Composite Reliability  $> 0.70$ . Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

### **3. Inner Model Evaluation**

The structural model strength is indicated by  $R^2$  values. Brand awareness has an  $R^2$  of 0.406 (40.6% variance explained by social media marketing and product quality). Purchase intention has an  $R^2$  of 0.507, classified as moderate.

### **4. Hypothesis Testing Results**

- H1 rejected: Social media marketing has no significant effect on brand awareness.
- H2 accepted: Product quality has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.
- H3 accepted: Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H4 accepted: Product quality has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H5 accepted: Brand awareness has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H6 rejected: Brand awareness does not mediate the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.
- H7 accepted: Brand awareness significantly mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intention.
- Hypothesis testing was subsequently performed using the bootstrapping procedure, with a summary of the results presented in the following figure:



## 5. Discussion

The finding that social media marketing does not significantly influence brand awareness contrasts with previous studies in fashion and culinary sectors. This divergence may be attributed to the respondent profile (>44 years), who tend to use social media for entertainment rather than for processing advertisements into long-term brand recall. However, social media marketing directly influences purchase intention, suggesting impulsive behavior driven by attractive promotions.

Product quality emerges as the dominant factor, significantly affecting both brand awareness and purchase intention. Brand awareness effectively mediates the quality–intention relationship but not the social media–intention relationship, indicating that farmers build brand perception based on tangible quality rather than digital marketing stimuli.

## Conclusions

Based on the analysis, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Social media marketing has no influence on brand awareness but directly influences purchase intention.
2. Product quality has a significant influence on both brand awareness and purchase intention.

3. Brand awareness has a positive influence on purchase intention.
4. Brand awareness only mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intention, not between social media marketing and purchase intention.

## **Recommendations**

**For Pesticide Companies:** Companies should prioritize consistent product quality and effectiveness, as these are the primary drivers of brand awareness. Social media marketing strategies should focus on direct sales promotions (hard selling) rather than pure branding, as farmers are more responsive to tangible quality evidence.

**For Future Researchers:** Future studies should consider expanding the research area or comparing farmer characteristics in more digitally advanced regions. It is also recommended to use higher confidence levels (99%) to reduce the margin of error.

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