

## THE DIGITAL ROUTE: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES IMPACT ON BUS SERVICE PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

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### *Abstract*

*This study aims to identify the social media marketing tactics that bus service should employ to enhance their purchase decision, underscoring the need for these tactics to be complemented by involvement and promotion for optimal effectiveness. A quantitative methodology is utilized, involving data collection and analysis from a purposive sample of 506 respondent from PO. Bejeu Jepara's clients. Data were gathered via questionnaires to assess the empirical model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-AMOS). The findings indicate that social media marketing activities positively and significantly influence purchase decisions when mediated by involvement and promotion. However, direct social media marketing activities do not show a significant impact on purchase decisions. This study offers fresh insights into the specific social media marketing activities that Bus Service should embrace. It underscores the pivotal role of Involvement and Promotion in enhancing the effectiveness of these strategies, leading to improved outcomes and stronger customer relationships.*

*Keywords: Bus Service; Involvement; Promotion; Purchase Decision; Social Media Marketing Activities.*

## INTRODUCTION

Social media's explosive growth has completely changed the way businesses engage with their consumers. It is now essential for transportation firms to use social media marketing to interact with their target markets, increase brand recognition, and cultivate client loyalty. When looking for information, opinions, and suggestions for transportation services, consumers are turning more and more to social media sites.

Numerous studies have explored the impact of social media marketing activities (SMMA) within the transportation sector. (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, & Algharabat, 2017) studied the influence of social media advertising on customer purchasing intentions within the aviation industry. Their study demonstrated that perceptions of usability, ease of use, and enjoyment in social media advertising positively affected consumer purchasing attitudes and intentions. (Seo & Park, 2018) explore the effect of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the aviation industry, highlighting the importance of engagement and interaction in driving positive outcomes toward brand equities and customer responses.

The Effectiveness of social media marketing activities in the transportation industry has also been linked to various factors, such as attitudes, use intentions, re-purchase, trust, commitment, and customer value creation. (Bigne, Andreu, Hernandez, & Ruiz, 2018) researched the relationship between the influence of social media on C2C and attitudes that ultimately influenced re-purchase, WOM, and e-WOM on low-cost airline services. The desire to utilize online transportation services is positively and significantly correlated with social media marketing, according to research by (Zahara, Rombe, Ngatimun, Suharsono, & Science, 2021). (Chou, Chen, Wong, & Management, 2023) in a study of low-cost airline passengers, his research finds that passenger engagement in corporate social media positively and significantly affects customer trust, commitment, and value creation.

Due to its shown ability to improve Divalona and Sciences' customers' happiness, research on SMMA, particularly in the transportation sector, is becoming more significant. Additionally, it has been shown that SMMA assists businesses in understanding the class and market disparities among transport service consumers, hence boosting the adoption rate of vacation destinations promoted on social media platforms (Zhang, Chen, Fu, & Society, 2023).

SMMA in transportation has been the subject of study since 2018. (Saraç, 2023) conducted more study and discovered that SMMA significantly and favorably influences airline passengers' brand and purchasing intentions. Additional study conducted by (Moslehpour, Dadvari, Nugroho, Do, & Logistics, 2021) shown that, in the early phases of the decision-making process when purchasing airline goods and services, the association between SMMA and purchase intent was considerably mediated by perceived value and trust.

According to the researchers' earlier study, no one has looked at the connection between SMMA and purchasing choices made in the setting of bus travel.

The study examines how bus transport companies' SMMA relate to their sales decisions. Furthermore, it proposes promotional and engagement variables as

mediation variables between SMMA and purchase decisions to use bus transport services.

The purpose of this research is to further our comprehension of the intricate connection between bus transport businesses' social media use success rates and their use of SMMA. The core of this study is investigating the many facets of these interactions with the goal of elucidating the mechanisms essential to successful marketing in the digital era. Furthermore, by describing how social media marketing techniques may be utilized to boost consumer engagement, the effect of advertising, and purchase choices on bus transport firms, this study aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the body of current marketing literature.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Social Media Marketing Activity**

Social media encompasses applications, platforms, or online media facilitating interaction, collaboration, and content sharing. Enabled by Web 2.0 infrastructure, it promotes user engagement and content creation and distribution (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012). Social media marketing builds brand-consumer relationships through personalized channels and user-centered interaction (Chi, 2011). It transforms marketing communications by connecting brands with consumers within social networks (Arora, Singh, Bhatt, & Sharma, 2021). Social media also enhances brand content creation, distribution, and consumer engagement (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020).

### **Promotion**

Promotion is a marketing strategy that aims to enlighten, influence, or convince the target market about the company and its offerings and remind them to be open to accepting, purchasing, and being faithful to the items that the firm is offering. (Andrews & Shimp, 2018) define promotions as any marketing initiatives aimed at eliciting a prompt buy or a transient purchase. (Kango, Kartiko, & Maarif, 2021). Social media, social networks, and the Internet are used for digital media promotion.

### **Involvement**

The degree to which people identify with a product or activity is referred to as participation. According to (Zaichkowsky, 1985) Involvement is simply defined as the amount of time and effort consumers take to find information, evaluation in the decision-making process (Lamb & Hair, 2004). According to (Richins & Bloch, 1986) A person's perception of an object's importance in light of their innate needs,

values, and interests is what defines their level of involvement. Previous research categorized engagement construction into two distinct types: engagement and sustainable engagement.

### **Purchase Decision**

According to (Schiffman & Lazar, 2010) a purchase decision is a process where consumers assess various alternative options and select the most suitable one based on specific considerations. According (Mahmoud & sciences, 2018), a purchasing decision is the process whereby consumers identify a problem, gather information about a specific product or brand, carefully evaluate each alternative to address the problem, and subsequently make a buying decision (Putri, Robiansyah, & Rahmawati, 2022).

### **The Relationship of Social Media Marketing Activity to Promotion**

Social media marketing campaigns have the power to inform, convince, and remind customers to react to a given product or service (Amalia, 2023). An enticing social media advertising has the potential to captivate those who initially have no intention of purchasing, prompting them to delve further into the details and ultimately make a purchase (Dewi, Imbayani, & Ribek, 2021). Thus, the more intense the social media marketing activity carried out by the company, then the product promotion will also be more effective in reaching consumers (Prayogo & Yoestini, 2022). The following theories can be constructed thanks to the aforesaid rationale :

H1 : Social Media Marketing Activity has a positive effect on Promotion.

### **The Relationship of Social Media Marketing Activity to Involvement**

Social media marketing activities exert a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions (Kodrat, 2021). Customer involvement with a brand might rise when they have a great brand experience. Another study explored the influence of brand familiarity and the quality of information on social media on consumer involvement. It concluded that higher brand familiarity and better information quality on social media platforms lead to increased consumer involvement, which positively affects purchase intentions (McClure, Seock, & services, 2020). The aforementioned logic makes it possible to formulate the following theories:

H2 : Social Media Marketing Activity has a positive effect on Involvement.

### **The Relationship of Social Media Marketing Activity to Purchase Decision**

Social media marketing efforts positively influence purchase choices by increasing brand awareness. Social media presence builds consumer relationships and facilitates brand interaction (Dini & Abdurrahman). Brand trust plays a mediating role in the connection between social media marketing and purchase decisions. Consistent and credible social media interactions enhance purchase intentions, particularly in the fast-food and consumer goods sectors (Hanaysha, 2022). Businesses can use these insights to develop targeted social media strategies, focusing on building brand awareness and trust through engaging content, thereby influencing consumer purchase decisions (Fajri, Rizkyanafi, & Ismaya, 2021). The foregoing rationale makes it possible to build the following theories:

H3 : Social Media Marketing Activity has a positive effect on Purchase Decision.

### **The Relationship of Promotion to Purchase Decision**

The research by (Jee, 2021) explores how discount sales promotions influence consumer choices from utilitarian and hedonistic perspectives, showing that discounts impact buying decisions in both ways. (Chen & Zhu, 2022) examine the relationship between purchase intention and dynamic marketing displays on online product pages, finding that dynamic displays significantly influence purchase intentions, especially with high customer involvement. (Hanaysha, 2020) states that promotions are marketing campaigns designed to persuade and motivate customers to make informed purchases. The following theories may be constructed thanks to the logic above :

H4 : Promotion has a positive effect on Purchase Decision.

### **The Relationship of Involvement to Purchase Decision**

Involvement is crucial in the purchase decision-making process. High-involvement purchases require more effort, such as researching multiple sources (Abramson & Desai, 1993). Conversely, low-engagement purchases involve less time and information gathering (Adhikari, 2019). Therefore, the level of customer engagement influences both the decision-making process and the effort expended in information search. Customers with low involvement spend less time and effort, while those with high involvement invest more work before making a purchase. The subsequent hypotheses may be constructed thanks to the logic above :

H5 : Involvement has a positive effect on Purchase Decision.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with PO Bejeu Jepara's clients. Primary data was collected through both face-to-face interviews and the distribution of online questionnaires. This case study used deliberate sampling with non-probability sampling to create its sample strategy. The study included a total of 506 respondents, representing authentic consumer samples. The data analysis methodology employs SEM with the analytical tool SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The tests used include the Outer Model Test, Inner Model Test, Hypothesis Test, and Mediation Test.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Outer Model (Measurement Model)

In this model there are two measurement models, namely the test:

#### 1. Convergent Validity

This measurement is considered satisfactory when the outer loading is above 0.7, and AVE value reaches a minimum of 0.5 (Ulum, Ghozali, & Chariri, 2008) Minimum value of 0.5. The results of the convergent validity test on the research model are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
**CONVERGENT VALIDITY TEST**

Indicator	Outer loading	AVE	Result
SMMA1	0.842		
SMMA2	0.920		
SMMA3	0.920		
SMMA4	0.928	0.846	Valid
SMMA5	0.850		
SMMA6	0.828		
SMMA7	0.778		
SMMA8	0.790		
INV1	0.782		
INV2	0.840		
INV3	0.782	0.797	Valid
INV4	0.933		
INV5	0.887		
PRO1	0.864	0.647	Valid
PRO2	0.910		

PRO3	0.896		
PRO4	0.947		
PRO5	0.943		
PUR1	0.944		
PUR2	0.893	0.754	Valid
PUR3	0.958		
PUR4	0.865		

Source: Data processed, (2024)

From these findings, it can be inferred that the indicators assessing Social Media Marketing Activity, Involvement, Promotion, and Purchase Decision demonstrate values exceeding 0.7 in the convergent validity test. Additionally, they demonstrate an AVE value exceeding 0.5, indicating their validity.

## 2. Reliability Test

Composite Reliability (Cr) is a measure of variable reliability that measures a reliable value of above 0.7 although it is not an absolute standard. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of reliability for all indicators, ranging between zero and one. If Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7, it indicates that the measure is considered reliable.

**Table 2.**  
**COMPOSITE RELIABILITY & CRONBACH'S ALPHA**

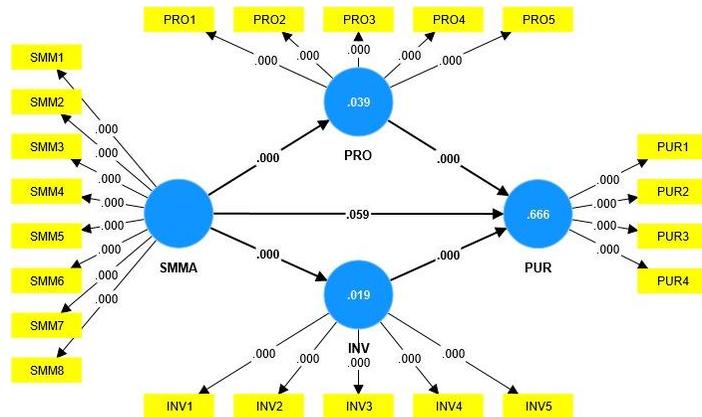
Variabel	Composite reliability	Croncach' alpha	Result
SMMA	0.974	0.978	
INV	0.936	0.951	Reliable
PRO	0.866	0.901	
PUR	0.890	0.924	

Source: Data processed, (2024)

In the Reliability Test, it can show that the indicators of all variables get a value above 0.7 and get a value above 0.7, so it can be declared reliable.

## Inner Model (Measurement Model)

The inner model is a model used to project causal relationships between variables that cannot be measured directly and hidden variables.



Source: Data processed, (2024)  
**Figure 1. STRUCTURAL MODEL**

**R-square**

R-square is a statistical metric used to measure the extent to which the independent variable influences the dependent variable. An R-square value of 0.67 is considered to indicate a strong influence, while a value of 0.33 suggests a moderate influence. A value of 0.19 suggests a weak influence.

**Table 3.**  
**R-SQUARE**

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted
INV	0.019	0.017
PRO	0.039	0.038
PUR	0.666	0.664

Source: Data processed, (2024)

From the data table, the R-square value for Involvement is 0.019 while the Adjusted R-square value is 0.017. Indicating that Social Media Marketing Activity has an impact of 1.9% on Involvement, which can be considered a weak influence. While the remaining 98.1% can be explained by other variables and indicators not described in this study.

The R-square value for Promotion is 0.039 while the Adjusted R-square value is 0.038. Indicating that Social Media Marketing Activity has a 3.9% impact on Promotion, which can be considered a weak influence. While the remaining 96.1% can be explained by other variables and indicators not described in this study.

In addition, the R-square value for Purchase Decision is 0.666 while the Adjusted R-square value is 0.664. Indicating that all exogenous constructs together have an impact of 66.6% on Purchase Decision, which can be considered a strong influence. While the remaining 33.4% can be explained by other variables and indicators not described in this study.

### Mediation Test

In mediation, there are three scenarios: non-mediation, full mediation, and partial mediation. Test results from bootstrapping with SmartPLS 4.0 interpret indirect effects based on the P value:  $P > 0.05$  suggests a negative effect, while  $P < 0.05$  suggests a positive effect.

**Table 4.**  
**PATH COEFFIEN**

Variabel	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
SMMA -> INV	0.138	0.139	0.036	3.873	0.000
SMMA -> PRO	0.199	0.200	0.038	5.160	0.000
SMMA -> PUR	0.058	0.057	0.031	1.891	0.059
INV -> PUR	0.273	0.274	0.042	6.563	0.000
PRO -> PUR	0.613	0.612	0.039	15.558	0.000

Source: Data processed, (2024)

**Table 5.**  
**SPECIFIC INDIRECT EFFECTS**

Variabel	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
SMMA -> PRO -> PUR	0.122	0.122	0.023	5.323	0.000
SMMA -> INV -> PUR	0.038	0.038	0.012	3.044	0.002

Source: Data processed, (2024)

The conclusion drawn is based on Tables 4 and 5 attached:

**The effect of Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision is mediated by Promotion.**

From table 4, it can be seen that the Path Coefficient of Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision has a negative relationship because P value = 0.059 > 0.05. In addition, table 6 Specific Indirect Effect Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision mediated by Promotion has a positive relationship because P value = 0.000 < 0.05 therefore, it can be categorized as Full Mediation.

**The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision mediated by Involvement**

From table 4, it can be seen that the Path Coefficient of Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision has a negative relationship because P value = 0.071 > 0.05. In addition, table 6 Specific Indirect Effect Social Media Marketing Activity on Purchase Decision mediated by Perceived Quality has a positive relationship because P value = 0.002 < 0.05 therefore, it can be categorized as Full Mediation.

**Hypothesis Test**

In hypothesis testing, T statistics and P value can be seen. If the P value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis can be accepted. To find out, it can be found in the Path Coefficient obtained through the Bootstrapping technique in the SmartPLS version 4.0 program.

**Table 6.  
 HYPOTHESIS TEST RESULTS**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<b>SMMA -&gt; INV</b>	Coeffisien = 0.138
	P value = 0.000
	T statistcs = 3.873
	T-tabel = 1.645
	T statistics > T-tabel
<b>SMMA -&gt; PRO</b>	Coeffisien = 0.199
	P value = 0.000
	T statistcs = 5.160
	T-tabel = 1.645
	T statistics > T-tabel
<b>SMMA -&gt; PUR</b>	Coeffisien = 0.058
	P value = 0.059
	T statistcs = 1.891
	T-tabel = 1.645

	T statistics > T-tabel
	Coeffisien = 0.273
	P value = 0.000
<b>INV -&gt; PUR</b>	T statistics = 6.563
	T-tabel = 1.645
	T statistics > T-tabel
	Coeffisien = 0.613
	P value = 0.000
<b>PRO -&gt; PUR</b>	T statistics = 15.558
	T-tabel = 1.645
	T statistics > T-tabel

Source: Data processed, (2024)

### **Hypothesis 1: The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activity on Involvement**

Indicates that the coefficient value (0.138) and T statistics (3.873) > T-table (1.645) and P value (0.000) < 0.05, then H0 is rejected and Ha1 is accepted. This indicates a positive and significant influence of the Social Media Marketing Activity variable on Involvement.

### **Hypothesis 2: The effect of Social Media Marketing Activity on Promotion**

Indicates that the coefficient value (0.199) and T statistics (5.160) > T-table (1.645) and P value (0.000) < 0.05, then H0 is rejected and Ha2 is accepted. This signifies a positive and significant influence of the Social Media Marketing Activity variable on Promotion.

### **Hypothesis 3: The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activiy on Purchase Decision**

Indicates that the coefficient value (0.058) and T statistics (1.891) > T-table (1.645) and P value (0.059) > 0.05, then H0 is rejected and Ha3 is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant influence of the Social Media Marketing Activity variable on Purchase Decision.

### **Hypothesis 4: The Effect of Involvement on Purchase Decision**

Indicates that the coefficient value (0.273) and T statistics (6.563) > T-table (1.645) and P value (0.000) < 0.05, then H0 is rejected and Ha4 is accepted. This indicates a positive and significant influence of the Involvement variable on Purchase Decision.

### **Hypothesis 5: The Effect of Promotion Activiy on Purchase Decision**

Indicates that the coefficient value (0.613) and T statistics (15.558) > T-table (1.645) and P value (0.000) <0.05, then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a</sub> is accepted. This indicates a positive and significant influence of the Promotion variable on Purchase Decision.

## **Discussion**

The hypothesis testing results of the study offer valuable insights into the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior within the bus service industry. The findings affirm existing literature, highlighting the positive impact of social media marketing on consumer decision-making.

The study identifies a significant positive relationship between social media marketing activities and promotion, which aligns with findings from research by (Amalia, 2023). This underscores the effectiveness of social media in promoting products or services and capturing consumer interest. Secondly, the study validates a positive association between social media marketing activities and consumer involvement, consistent with (Zaichkowsky, 1985) theory and supported by Dini & Abdurrahman. Engaging social media content enhances consumer interaction and engagement with brands and products.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates a positive impact of social media marketing activities on purchase decisions, which echoes findings from (Kodrat, 2021) and (Fajri, Rizkyanfi, & Smaya, 2021). Social media plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer purchase intentions by enhancing brand awareness and fostering trust. In summary, these results add to the existing research on social media marketing and consumer behavior in the transportation sector. The findings suggest that bus service companies can improve their marketing strategies by utilizing social media to promote their services, engage consumers effectively, and cultivate brand loyalty in the modern digital marketplace.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigates the impact of Social Media Marketing Strategy on the Social Media Performance of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs). The findings reveal that directly applying Social Media Marketing Strategy does not improve Social Media Performance, as evidenced by the non-significant result in H<sub>2</sub>. However, when reinforced with Social Media Based Customer Engagement (H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>3</sub>), it significantly enhances Social Media Performance.

Theoretical implications include providing empirical evidence of the relationship between Social Media Marketing Strategy and Social Media Performance. The study suggests leveraging Social Media Based Customer Engagement as a mediator to enhance the positive impact of Social Media Marketing Strategy on Social Media Performance.

These findings are pertinent for MSMEs in the food and beverage industry, recommending multiple social media marketing strategies such as encouraging content sharing, regular customer interaction, product introductions, and brand development through social media channels.

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