

## The Influence of Digital Marketing on Purchase Intention with Brand Image as an Intervening Variable

Puteri Kamilla

Politeknik Siber Cerdika Internasional, Indonesia

E-mail : [puteri\\_kamilla@polteksci.ac.id](mailto:puteri_kamilla@polteksci.ac.id)

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### Abstract

In the digital era, the rapid growth of internet use and social media has encouraged companies to adopt digital marketing strategies to influence consumer behavior and strengthen their competitive position. Digital marketing is considered an effective tool not only for delivering product information but also for shaping a positive brand image that may lead to higher purchase intention. This study examines the influence of digital marketing on purchase intention, positioning brand image as a mediating mechanism within the relationship. Drawing on contemporary digital consumer behavior perspectives, the research investigates how interactive and content-driven marketing activities shape consumers' cognitive evaluations and behavioral intentions. A purposive sampling method was employed, involving 137 respondents residing in Semarang City who actively engage with digital platforms. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with WarpPLS 8.0 to assess both direct and indirect effects. The findings demonstrate that digital marketing significantly and positively affects brand image and purchase intention. Brand image also exerts a significant positive influence on purchase intention and partially mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention. These results suggest that digital marketing not only directly stimulates consumer buying intention but also operates indirectly by strengthening favorable brand perceptions. In conclusion, the results are useful for evaluating the implementation of digital marketing and brand image in increasing product purchase intention.

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## INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing in Indonesia has seen significant growth, driven by the increasing use of the internet. This trend has prompted companies to adapt their marketing strategies by leveraging digital platforms, particularly social media (Harto, Rozak, & Rukmana, 2021). Ultra Milk is one such company that has embraced digital media in its marketing efforts. Since late 2010, Ultra Milk has been utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram to promote its products through advertisements and campaigns. Ultra Milk's choice to communicate through digital media is not merely to follow trends but also to popularize the culture of drinking bottled liquid milk. Through its social media platform, @mymilk\_id, Ultra Milk consistently advocates for a healthy lifestyle. The brand's marketing strategy includes various activities designed to encourage greater consumption of bottled milk while fostering positive engagement with the community. In terms of strategy, Ultra Milk is recognized for its interactive approach to marketing via social media, where direct communication with consumers plays a crucial role in building a strong brand image.

In academic literature, brands are often linked to specific images that evoke particular associations in consumers' minds. According to Kotler and Keller (2015), brand image is defined as the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers, reflected in the associations embedded in their memory and often recalled when encountering a brand's slogan. A brand, as an integral component of a product, plays a critical role in influencing consumer behavior. Establishing a strong and positive brand image is therefore essential for marketers, as it shapes consumers' evaluations of brand options and enhances their satisfaction (Hidayat, 2018).

Ultra Milk, apart from being recognized for its variety of flavored bottled milk, is also distinguished by its interactive marketing strategies through digital media. A positive brand image increases consumers' interest in a product, and factors such as digital marketing and brand image significantly influence purchase intention. Digital marketing, as an essential element of a company's strategy, helps shape a favorable brand image, which, in turn, enhances consumer purchase intention. Fitrianna and Aurinawati (2020) highlighted that digital marketing contributes to building a stronger brand image, while Yanti and Darwanto (2021) demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing purchase intention. Although many studies affirm the positive relationship among digital marketing, brand image, and purchase intention, others report contradictory findings, suggesting no significant influence.

This research is based on the development of literature from previous research conducted in several studies, then adjusted to the research case study. Research that has been conducted related to digital marketing, brand image and purchase intention (Azzam et al., 2025; Mauliza & Fadhillah, 2025; Hanifah, 2024; Harto et al., 2021; Sulistiyo, Fitriana, & Lee, 2020; Widyana & Batangriyan, 2020; Ocilia & Bintari, 2021; Pradipta, 2015; Fitrianna & Aurinawati, 2020; Yanti & Darwanto 2021; Setiawaty 2017; Jayabaya & Mediawati 2018; Rb et al. 2021; (Madevi et al., 2019; Waharini & Purwantini, 2018) Nurhasanah et al., 2017) shows that there are inconsistent results on the association between digital marketing, brand image and purchase intention. In addition, the impact of brand image as mediator on the association between digital marketing and purchase intention is an interesting concern to find different results.

Finally, this study proposes to investigate the influence of digital marketing and brand image on purchase intention. First, the research investigates the association between digital marketing and brand image. Second, the research examines the association between digital marketing and purchase intention. Third, the research explores the association between digital marketing and purchase intention with brand image as an intervening variable.

Companies increasingly recognize the potential of digital media as an effective marketing strategy. The widespread accessibility of technology has led to a significant increase in the use of digital media in daily life, prompting businesses to adopt digital strategies to shape and enhance their brand image. Digital marketing, particularly through interactive digital platforms, plays a critical role in building brand image. According to Widyana and Batangriyan (2020), interactive digital media can enhance the perception of a product's brand image. Thalib and Sukartaatmadja (2018) further note that one of the key advantages of interactive digital communication is its ability to effectively convey product information to consumers, which contributes to a positive brand image.

Harto, Rozak, and Rukmana (2021) highlight that digital marketing has a significant positive impact on brand image, emphasizing that engaging and interactive digital content can increase purchase intention for a brand. Similarly, Ocilia and Bintari (2021) argue that digital

media marketing is more effective in capturing customer attention due to its accessibility. The two-way communication facilitated by digital platforms allows companies to address consumer needs more efficiently, thereby increasing purchase intention for their products. Yanti and Darwanto (2021) suggest that high-quality digital media not only enhances a product's appeal but also significantly boosts consumer purchase intention.

Consumers tend to favor brands with strong, reliable images, as these provide clarity and reduce the perceived risk associated with purchases. According to Rb et al. (2021), the strength of a brand's image is a key factor influencing purchase intention; a stronger brand image correlates with higher purchase intention. Digital marketing enables consumers to leave and read reviews, share comments about products and services, and assist others in making purchase decisions (Harto et al., 2021). In today's technology-driven era, potential buyers frequently consult online reviews and feedback before making purchasing decisions, underscoring the importance of cultivating a positive brand image through digital marketing.

Research consistently demonstrates that digital marketing positively influences brand image, which in turn drives consumer purchase intention (Azzam et al., 2025; Mauliza & Fadhilla, 2025; Hanifah, 2024; Fitrianna & Aurinawati, 2020; Widyana & Batangriyan, 2020; Harto et al., 2021; Muslimah et al., 2018; Rb et al., 2021; Thalib & Sukartaatmadja, 2018). Widyana and Batangriyan (2020) observe that as consumers increasingly shift toward digital communication, companies have adapted by employing digital marketing strategies, yielding positive outcomes for brand image and purchase intention. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: Digital marketing has a significant positive effect on *brand image*.

H<sub>2</sub>: Digital marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

H<sub>3</sub>: Brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

H<sub>4</sub>: Digital marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention with *brand image* as an intervening variable.

## **METHOD**

The population for this study consisted of individuals residing in Semarang City who were familiar with Ultra Milk products. Semarang City was selected as the population focus due to its larger population compared to other cities in Central Java. Furthermore, as the capital of Central Java, Semarang benefited from more equitable access to digital technology distribution and education among its residents.

The study employed a probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, with the following criteria for selecting respondents:

- 1) Respondents had to reside in Semarang City.
- 2) Respondents had to be active users of Instagram.
- 3) Respondents had to be familiar with Ultra Milk products.

To facilitate data collection, a Google Form was used to distribute the survey and gather responses. The questionnaire was digitized and shared with potential participants, resulting in 137 respondents who were included in the study.

Table 1 defines the variables used in this study. The research variables in this study were purchase intention (Purchase), brand image (Brand), and digital marketing (Digital).

Tabel 1. Definisi Operasional Variabel		
Variable	Measurement	Measurement Scale
Purchase Intention (Purchase)	a. Attention; b. Interest; c. Desire; d. Action (Madevi et al., 2019)	Likert Scale 1-5
Brand Image (Brand)	a. Corporate image; b. Product image; c. User image (Rb et al., 2021)	Likert Scale 1-5
Digital Marketing (Digital)	a. Context; b. Communication; c. Collaboration; d. Connection (Sulis, 2010)	Likert Scale 1-5

This study used Structural Equation Model – Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) to analyze the relationship between variables. SPSS version 22 was used to show descriptive statistics results and WarpPLS 5.0 was used to verify model and research hypotheses based on SEM-PLS.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

### Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the research variables, including digital marketing, brand image, and purchase intention. The results of the analysis for each variable are presented based on the following criteria:

Tabel 2. Description of Digital Marketing Variables													
No	Indicator	Frequency										Total Score	Mean
		SS		S		KS		TS		STS			
		F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS		
1	Context	71	355	66	264	0	0	0	0	0	0	619	4.52
2	Communication	63	315	74	296	0	0	0	0	0	0	611	4.46
3	Collaboration	54	270	83	332	0	0	0	0	0	0	602	4.39
4	Connection	81	405	56	224	0	0	0	0	0	0	629	4.59
Average value												2,461	4.49

Source: Data processed 2025

Table 3 reveals an average respondent score of 4.49, indicating a very strong response. This suggests that digital marketing is highly effective in generating interest in purchasing Ultra Milk products. By leveraging digital marketing strategies that emphasize context, communication, collaboration, and connection, the brand can deliver valuable experiences and provide consumers with easy access to information. This conclusion is further supported by the

high average scores across all indicators, particularly the context indicator, which achieved a score of 4.52. This result highlights that consumers appreciate the product information shared through Ultra Milk's Instagram account.

**Tabel 3. Description of Brand Image Variables**

No	Indicator	Frequency										Total Score	Mean
		SS		S		KS		TS		STS			
		F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS		
1	Corporate image;	86	430	51	204	0	0	0	0	0	0	634	4.63
2	Product image;	83	415	54	216	0	0	0	0	0	0	631	4.61
3	User image	83	415	54	216	0	0	0	0	0	0	631	4.61
Average value											1,896	4.62	

Source: Data processed 2025

Table 3 shows an average respondent score of 4.62, indicating a very high level of response. This suggests that the brand image established by Ultra Milk products is highly regarded by consumers. This is further evidenced by the "corporate image" indicator, which achieved an average score of 4.63, demonstrating that Ultra Milk products are associated with a strong and positive reputation for the company.

**Tabel 4. Description of Purchase Intention Variables**

No	Indicator	Frequency										Total Score	Mean
		SS		S		KS		TS		STS			
		F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS	F	FS		
1	Attention;	51	255	86	344	0	0	0	0	0	0	599	4.37
2	Interest;	60	300	77	308	0	0	0	0	0	0	608	4.44
3	Desire;	65	325	72	288	0	0	0	0	0	0	613	4.47
4	Action	65	325	72	288	0	0	0	0	0	0	613	4.47
Average value											2,433	4.43	

Source: Data processed 2025

Table 4 reveals an average respondent score of 4.43, indicating a very high level of response. This suggests that the purchase intention for Ultra Milk products is notably strong. This conclusion is supported by the attention indicator, which has an average score of 4.37, demonstrating that consumers consistently pay attention to Ultra Milk products on Instagram.

### SEM Analysis

The SEM estimation of the direct effect is presented in Table 6, while that of indirect effect is presented in Table 7.

**Tabel 5. Hasil direct effect**

Variable	Brand		Purchase	
	Path Coeff.	p-values	Path Coeff.	p-values
Digital	0.392	<0.001***	0.423	<0.001***
Brand	-	-	0.277	<0.001***
		R <sup>2</sup> 0.42; Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> 0.41	R <sup>2</sup> 0.47; Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> 0.46	

**Notes:** we do not include the results in this table as we do not have any specific hypotheses for those variables: \*, \*\* and \*\*\* denote significance at  $\alpha = 10\%$ ,  $5\%$  and  $1\%$ , respectively

Source: Data processed 2025

<b>Tabel 6. Hasil indirect effect</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Purchase</b>		
	<b>Path Coeff.</b>	<b>p-values</b>	<b>VAF</b>
Digital	0.108	<0.001***	20.42%

**Notes:** we do not include the results in this table as we do not have any specific hypotheses for those variables: \*, \*\* and \*\*\* denote significance at  $\alpha = 10\%$ ,  $5\%$  and  $1\%$ , respectively

Source: Data processed 2025

The research model equation is as follows:

$$\mathbf{Brand = 0.39Digital}$$

$$\mathbf{Purchase = 0.42Digital + 0.28Brand}$$

Description:

Purchase: Purchase Intention

Digital : Digital Marketing

Brand : Brand Image

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that brand image partially mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention. Digital marketing has a significant positive impact on purchase intention with brand image as an variabel intervening.

### **The influence of Digital Marketing on Brand Image**

The digital marketing strategy implemented by Ultra Milk through Instagram has positively impacted its brand image by providing product information that resonates with consumers. The content on their Instagram account is comprehensive and clear, with frequent interactions with followers, and the launch of popular prize campaigns, all of which contribute to enhancing the company's reputation. This has helped position Ultra Milk as a well-known dairy brand with a variety of flavors, widely consumed across Indonesia. Therefore, it can be concluded that digital marketing has the potential to improve brand image. Furthermore, interactive communication through Instagram facilitates the delivery of product information, fostering a more positive and improved brand image. This aligns with research by Mauliza & Fadhillah (2025), Fitrianna & Aurinawati (2020), Harto et al. (2021), Sulistiyo et al. (2020), Thalib & Sukartaatmadja (2018), and Widyana & Batangriyan (2020), which confirms that digital marketing can significantly enhance brand image.

### **The Influence of Digital Marketing on Purchase Intention**

The digital marketing strategy employed by Ultra Milk through Instagram influences purchase intention by providing information about their dairy products that consumers find appealing. The content on Ultra Milk's Instagram account is thorough and clear, with regular interactions with followers and the organization of prize campaigns that attract consumers' attention. This keeps consumers engaged with Ultra Milk products on Instagram, sparking their interest in purchasing the advertised items. The two-way communication between the company

and consumers via Instagram helps meet consumer needs, encouraging them to make a purchase. Therefore, the higher the quality of content shared by Ultra Milk on Instagram, the greater impact to increase purchase intention. This aligns with research by Azzam et al. (2025), Ocilia & Bintari (2021), Pradipta (2015), and Yanti & Darwanto (2021), which confirms that digital marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

### **The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Intention**

Ultra Milk establishes its brand image through a strong reputation as a dairy product known for its wide variety of flavors and as a popular packaged milk brand widely consumed by Indonesians. This helps keep consumers focused on Ultra Milk products, sparking interest in purchasing them and encouraging attempts to purchase the products. The stronger the brand image of Ultra Milk, the greater the consumer interest in buying the product. Therefore, a more favorable brand image leads to higher purchase intention. The findings of this study align with research by Azzam et al. (2025), Kamilah & Wahyuati (2017), Madevi et al. (2019), Muslimah et al. (2018), Ocilia & Bintari (2021), Pradipta (2015), Rb et al. (2021), Setiawaty (2017), and Suharto et al. (2016), which all indicate that brand image can significantly enhance purchase intention.

### **The Influence of Digital Marketing on Purchase Intention with Brand Image as an Intervening Variable**

The digital marketing strategy implemented by Ultra Milk through Instagram, by providing product information that resonates with consumers, offering detailed and clear content, engaging frequently with followers, and running popular prize campaigns, helps enhance the company's reputation. Ultra Milk becomes known for its wide range of flavors and as a leading packaged milk brand consumed by nearly all Indonesians. This fosters greater purchase intention, as consumers pay attention to Ultra Milk products on Instagram, become interested in the products, desire to purchase them, and attempt to purchase the product. Consequently, Ultra Milk's use of Instagram for digital marketing, with its complete and interactive content, enhances the company's brand image and increase consumer purchase intention. The more informative and engaging Ultra Milk's Instagram content make better brand image, which in turn stimulates higher purchase intention. These findings align with research by Azzam et al. (2025), Fitrianna & Aurinawati (2020), Harto et al. (2021), Widyana & Batangriyan (2020), Thalib & Sukartaatmadja (2018), and Rb et al. (2021), which shows that digital marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention with brand image as an intervening variable.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study provides that digital marketing has a positive influence on brand image and purchase intention. In addition, brand image has a positive influence on purchase intention. So it is known that brand image can mediate the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention. This study has several limitations: a) it focused on one product and brand; b) it was conducted only in Semarang City; and c) the independent variable analyzed was limited to digital marketing. Future research should consider incorporating additional variables

not addressed in this study, expanding the geographic scope of the sample, and comparing a broader range of products, both within Indonesia and internationally, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing purchase intention. From a practical perspective, companies are advised to continuously optimize their digital marketing strategies by creating more engaging, interactive, and informative content, as well as maintaining consistency in building a positive brand image to effectively increase consumer purchase intention.

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