

Analysis of Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions with Brand Awareness as Intervening Variable at Mitrakuli.Id

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Abstract.

Indonesia's construction market is projected to grow by 5.48% by 2025, driving increased demand for project equipment rental services. PT. Mitra Kuli Indonesia (Mitrakuli.id), a newcomer in East Java's project equipment rental industry, faces challenges in building customer loyalty and achieving revenue stability due to intense competition. This research aims to analyze the influence of Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on purchase decisions for project equipment rental services, with Brand Awareness as an intervening variable. The research employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling with Smart PLS, analyzing data from 222 respondents selected through purposive sampling from Mitrakuli.id customers who have used services at least once in the 2023–2025 period in East Java. Data collection utilized structured questionnaires measuring Word of Mouth, Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Decision constructs. Results indicate that Word of Mouth significantly influences Brand Awareness ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$) and Purchase Decisions ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$). Social Media Marketing positively affects Brand Awareness ($\beta = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$) and Purchase Decisions ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.009$). Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between both Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions, with indirect effects of 0.073 ($p < 0.016$) and 0.107 ($p < 0.033$), respectively. The findings demonstrate that integrated marketing strategies combining traditional Word of Mouth with digital Social Media Marketing through Brand Awareness enhancement effectively drive purchase decisions in the B2B project equipment rental industry.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision, Social Media Marketing, Word of Mouth.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's construction market is projected to grow by approximately 5.48% in 2025 compared to 2024, driven by strong government infrastructure initiatives, private sector investments, and urban development projects (Kompas.com, 2024). This growth outlook reflects optimism about the sector's expansion despite challenges like rising material costs and labor shortages (Chong et al., 2020). The government's focus on infrastructure, industrialization, and urban planning, along with ongoing public-private partnerships, plays a crucial role in sustaining this growth (Lee et al., 2021; Mohamad et al., 2020). Public-private partnerships, in particular, have been pivotal in addressing funding gaps and enhancing project delivery (Memon et al., 2019; Salim et al., 2022).

Additionally, the sector's expansion is supported by foreign direct investments in construction and urban infrastructure (Yusuf et al., 2021), which further enhances the growth prospects.

Project equipment rental is a rapidly growing segment within this broader construction market, serving as an efficient, cost-effective solution for contractors, especially small to medium-sized ones, who prefer renting tools over owning and maintaining them.

PT. Mitra Kuli Indonesia (Mitrakuli.id), originally established in 2018 as Lacarjaya and rebranded in 2023, operates within this competitive rental market in East Java. Its primary income (about 85%) comes from renting out project equipment such as heavy machinery and project aids, a focus area shared by most competitors (Han et al., 2010). The market for project tool rental, particularly small aids, has reached a Red Ocean phase with intense competition that affects revenue stability for players like Mitrakuli.id.

The company faces fluctuations in sales attributable partly to competition and low brand awareness among target consumers. This concern is reinforced by marketing literature, such as Macdonald and Sharp (2000), emphasizing the critical influence of brand awareness on purchasing decisions. In this industry, firms use two main marketing approaches: longstanding companies rely heavily on Word of Mouth (WOM), while newer entrants aggressively use digital channels including social media platforms, marketplaces, and websites, as supported by Tam and Lung (2025).

Mitrakuli.id shows strong social media engagement (16.4% engagement rate and 246,500 total views), despite producing less content than some competitors. This highlights that content quality and resonance with customers matter more than quantity for building brand awareness and driving consumer engagement. High engagement on digital platforms suggests that digital WOM and strategic content can strengthen brand perception and indirectly impact purchase decisions.

While Mitrakuli.id has utilized digital marketing tools such as Facebook Marketplace, Instagram, and TikTok, combining these with traditional WOM strategies is advisable. Such integration could enhance brand trust, a key determinant in consumer decision-making when faced with many market options. Research by Hanaysha (2022) and others confirms that brand trust acts as a mediator between social media marketing and purchases, while WOM directly influences buying decisions (Ahmad et al., 2014; Handiki and Mustikasari, 2019).

Thus, the current research focus aims to analyze how WOM and social media marketing impact purchase decisions in the project equipment rental industry, with brand trust mediating the relationships. This study seeks to provide strategic insights for marketing approaches tailored to the needs of this competitive and evolving

market segment, offering both academic value and practical guidance for practitioners.

This analysis aligns well with the earlier passage you provided on the topic, complementing the market context, competitive dynamics, and importance of brand awareness in shaping consumers' purchasing behavior within Indonesia's growing construction and project equipment rental sectors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research aimed to obtain data to support the analysis results. A quantitative approach was used. According to Sugiyono (2019:16–17), the quantitative method is rooted in positivism and is used to study specific populations or samples, with data collection through instruments and numerical or statistical analysis to test hypotheses. The data analysis tool employed was Smart PLS. The study was conducted at Mitrakuli.id in Malang City from September 2024 to May 2025.

The population included all individuals who were the focus of observation (Setyosari, 2015). In this study, the population consisted of 500 Mitrakuli.id customers from September 2023 to March 2025, selected due to available bookkeeping records during this period and the company's rebranding and focus on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

Sampling involved selecting a representative subset of the population to generalize the findings. Setyosari (2015) highlights the importance of sampling when reaching the entire population is impractical due to time, cost, or access limitations.

Purposive sampling was used, based on criteria defined by the researchers (Kurniasari & Budiarmo, 2018). The criteria required respondents to be Mitrakuli.id customers who had used project equipment rental services at least once, resided in East Java, and had used the services in 2023. This ensured that the data was relevant to the research context.

The Slovin formula was applied to determine the minimum sample size from the population, considering an acceptable margin of error. This formula is useful in surveys when the population is known but too large to study exhaustively (Sugiyono, 2017).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Information:

N: total population

n: number of samples required

E: sample error rate 5%

$$n = \frac{500}{1 + 500(0,05^2)} = 222.22 \text{ respondents} = 222 \text{ respondents}$$

Based on the calculation of the number of samples above, it was found that the number of samples in this study was 222 respondents.

Data analysis in this research employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS software. The analysis process includes several stages:

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis: Analyzing respondent characteristics and variable descriptions using frequency distributions and central tendency measures.
2. Measurement Model Evaluation: Testing validity and reliability of research instruments through:
 - Convergent validity testing using loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
 - Discriminant validity testing using cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criteria
 - Reliability testing using composite reliability values
3. Structural Model Evaluation: Testing relationships between latent variables through:
 - Path coefficient analysis to determine relationship direction and significance
 - R-square evaluation to measure model's explanatory power
 - Effect size (f^2) analysis to determine practical significance
 - Mediation analysis to test indirect effects
4. Hypothesis Testing: Using bootstrapping technique with 5,000 subsamples to test research hypotheses with significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

In this validity test, it is seen based on the values of convergent validity and discriminant validity. The value of all validity tests must be in accordance with the criteria of each test conducted so that indicators can be used in this study. The following are the results of the validity test in this study:

(1) Convergent Validity Test

Table 1. Loading Factor Results

	<i>Brand Awareness (Z)</i>	<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	<i>Social Media Marketing (X2)</i>	<i>Word of Mouth (X1)</i>
X1.3				0.794
X1.4				0.861
X2.1			0.760	
X2.2			0.825	
X2.3			0.727	
X2.4			0.654	

	Brand Awareness (Z)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Social Media Marketing (X2)	Word of Mouth (X1)
Y1		0.717		
Y2		0.787		
Y4		0.655		
Z.1	0.759			
Z.2	0.649			
Z.3	0.752			
Z.4	0.773			

The accepted loading factor value according to Hair et al. (2010) is 0.5. Based on Table 1, Each indicator has a score above 0.5, indicating that all indicators from Word Of Mouth, Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and purchasing decisions are declared valid.

Tabel 2 Hasil Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
<i>Brand Awareness (Z)</i>	0.540
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	0.520
<i>Social Media Marketing (X2)</i>	0.553
<i>Word Of Mouth (X1)</i>	0.686

According to Abdillah & Hartono (2015), the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is said to be valid when the value is above 0.5. Based on Table 2, it is known that all variables in this study have AVE values that exceed these thresholds, so it can be concluded that each construct has met the requirements for convergent validity and is declared valid for use in model measurement.

(2) Discriminant Validity Test

Table 3 Cross Loading Results

	Brand Awareness (Z)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Social Media Marketing (X2)	Word Of Mouth (X1)
X1.3	0.300	0.409	0.222	0.794
X1.4	0.425	0.432	0.382	0.861
X2.1	0.370	0.309	0.760	0.165
X2.2	0.461	0.401	0.825	0.351
X2.3	0.358	0.166	0.727	0.172
X2.4	0.361	0.385	0.654	0.373
Y1	0.415	0.717	0.366	0.286
Y2	0.375	0.787	0.311	0.477
Y4	0.276	0.655	0.282	0.318
Z.1	0.759	0.433	0.427	0.382
Z.2	0.649	0.233	0.444	0.195
Z.3	0.752	0.363	0.342	0.311
Z.4	0.773	0.401	0.346	0.385

According to Ghozali (2014:37), the cross loading test is declared valid when the indicator value of a variable is better or greater than with other variables. Table 3 shows the results of the cross loading test where all indicators of the research variables are larger, than other variables. Based on the results mentioned above, all research indicators are declared valid.

Table 4 Foner Laker Results

		Brand Awareness (Z)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Social Media Marketing (X2)	Word Of Mouth (X1)
Brand Awareness (Z)		0.735			
Purchase Decision (Y)		0.497	0.721		
Social Media Marketing (X2)		0.527	0.442	0.744	
Word Of Mouth (X1)		0.443	0.507	0.373	0.828

According to the analysis using the Fornell-Larcker method, each construct has a higher square root value of AVE than the correlation with other constructs in cells that are inline or cellulose, indicating the discriminant validity has been met. For example, the value for X1 is 0.828, which indicates a greater value than its correlative relationship with other constructs than Brand Awareness (0.443), Purchase Decision (0.507), and Social Media Marketing (0.373). The same applies to other constructs, namely Brand Awareness (Z) = 0.735, Purchase Decision (Y) = 0.721, and Social Media Marketing (X2) = 0.744. In conclusion, all constructs in the model have strong discriminant validity, as each construct is able to explain its indicators better than other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Reliability Test

Table 5. Reliability Results

	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Awareness (Z)	0.824	0.540
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.764	0.520
Social media marketing (X2)	0.831	0.553
Word Of Mouth (X1)	0.813	0.686

Reliability is measured based on Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability calculations. Nonetheless, this study recommends the use of PLS-SEM because this method prioritizes items based on their individual reliability levels. Given the limitations of the use of Cronbach's Alpha, this study uses composite reliability as a tool to assess the internal consistency of constructs more accurately. Composite

reliability is considered more representative in describing the reliability of the instrument. The reliability value of composites is in the range between 0 to 1, where the higher the value indicates the better the level of internal consistency. According to Hair et al. (2014), composite reliability values between 0.60 to 0.70 are still acceptable. However, if the value is below 0.60, it indicates that the construct does not have adequate internal consistency, all variables in this study have a composite reliability value that exceeds 0.7, which indicates that each variable has met the reliability criteria. namely Word of Mouth Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and purchase decisions are declared reliable.

Discussion

1. The Influence of Word of Mouth on Brand Awareness

The results of statistical tests indicate that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant influence on Brand Awareness. When viewed from the age graph of the respondents, 31.5% of users are generation X, this is according to the research by Retnowati (2017), Generation X shows a tendency to be more likely to trust the input given by the closest people, such as family and friends. This shows that Generation X still relies on Word of Mouth in the basic stage of CBBE, namely brand awareness Keller (1993). It is evidenced by several customers from Mitrakuli who come directly to check the office and also the equipment that is rented.

In accordance with the theory of Keller (1993) CBBE. Customer-based brand equity is reflected in the influence of consumer knowledge on their response to marketing. The higher the awareness and positive perception of the brand, the more likely it is that consumers will respond positively, including in the purchase decision. This is in line with the current position of Mitrakuli.id customers, where they are starting to show brand response through the formation of consumer judgments on the credibility and excellence of the brand and also actively recommend the brand to others. The response shows that Mitrakuli.id has been in the stage of building an emotional relationship with its consumers, as can be seen from the results of standard deviation, Word of Mouth The indicator with the highest score is Recommended which is 0.42, standard deviation. In Brand Awareness, the indicator with the highest score is Recognition, which is 0.4, it can be concluded that as a result of recommendations, it can affect recognition.

These findings reinforce the results obtained in previous research by Ulansky, (2023) who stated that WOM plays an important role in shaping and increasing customer awareness of brands. In addition, according to Upadana and Pramudana (2020), Word Of Mouth is also a crucial element in sales, service, communication, and marketing strategies because it is able to reflect the Company's brand image.

According to the results of this study, H1 which states that Word Of Mouth has a significant positive effect on Brand Awareness is acceptable and in accordance with previous research

2. The Influence of Word Of Mouth on Purchase Decisions

Word Of Mouth also had a significant positive effect Purchase Decision (Y) obtained a coefficient of 0.325 with a t-statistic of 4.764 and a p value of 0.000, which means that the influence is significant. From the results of statistical analysis, it is known that Word of Mouth (WOM) has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions, when viewed from the chart of How Consumers Know Mitrakuli.id, as many as 45% of respondents know Mitrakuli.id through offline information and therefore plays a strategic role in introducing and conveying information about services to customers, which indicates that the stronger the influence of WOM, The higher the consumer makes a purchase.

In this context, WOM is related to the graph of respondent usage, which is that 37.8% of the most respondents are millennials Where the millennial generation is the productive age in the construction sector, ranging from daily workers to contractors. In this generation, we really trust information from recommendations from colleagues or family, in line with the average user of this project tool rental service where many mitrakuli customers who use project tool rental services differ recommendations, for b2b wom that is formed directly is a recommendation from people around the project, it can be that in 1 large project work there are several subcontractors who fill, From there, WOM was formed directly where they exchanged information related to the project equipment that was rented, because most subcontractors who handle large projects have a strict administrative system so that usually the person in charge of the field is looking for project equipment rental that can definitely meet the needs administratively. Connect with purchasing decisions, these direct WOMs from proven colleagues reduce risk and speed up the selection process to tailor their project needs. The stronger the influence of Word of Mouth, the greater the tendency of customers to make decisions in using project tool rental services. These findings are in line with previous research that stated that WOM is a source of information that is trusted by consumers in the decision-making stage of consumers, especially in the context of technical and high-risk services such as project equipment rentals (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Based on the results of this study, H2 which states that Word of Mouth has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions is acceptable and in accordance with previous research

3. Brand Awareness Has a Positive Effect on Purchase Decisions

The path coefficient explains that the value of the coefficient of 0.254 in brand trust has a positive influence on the Purchase Decision. This means that the higher the consumer's awareness of the brand, the more likely they are to decide to buy the product or service. The T-value = 2.627 is greater than the critical limit of 1.96 and the P-value = 0.009 is smaller than 0.05, which means this effect is statistically significant. In F_square brand awareness also has an effect on purchase decisions. Thus, brand awareness has proven to play an important role in encouraging consumer decisions to make purchases. Strong brand awareness provides a sense of security for customers in choosing a service provider, especially for project needs that involve project tools and are high-risk.

In this case, companies that have high brand visibility on social media or the building worker community will be easier to remember by potential customers. These findings are in line with research (Aaker, 2012) which states that Brand Awareness increases the likelihood of brands entering the consumer "evoked set", which is a collection of brands considered when buying. This is in line with the theory presented by Keller (1993a) how consumer perception of brands is formed and how this perception creates added value (brand equity) for a product or service can affect Brand Awareness, which in turn plays a role in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions for Mitrakuli.id project equipment rental services. Based on the results of this study, H3 which states that Brand Awareness has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions is acceptable and in accordance with previous research

4. The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

The path coefficient shows that X2 exerts a positive and significant influence on Z with a coefficient value of 0.420, t-statistic of 5.756, and p value of 0.000. As evidenced by the graph of consumers knowing Mitrakuli.id, as many as 55% of respondents know Mitrakuli.id through social media, it can be concluded that social media has an influence on Mitrakuli.id,

Mitrakuli focuses on using Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to do its marketing, which allows Mitrakuli to convey product information visually and interactively, reaching potential customers more widely and quickly. It can be seen from tables 1.3 and 1.4 where competitor analysis is carried out in using social media, The impact of this use is that many potential customers interact through messenger and comments on social media so that this strategy helps create stronger brand recognition in the minds of consumers. In other words, if Social Media Marketing is Mitrakuli.id as the initial stage of brand recognition in accordance with Customer Based Brand Equity Kevin Lane Keller (1993a). In accordance with previous research by Panjaitan & Simanjuntak, (2024) Regarding the effect of Social Media Marketing on brand

awareness and consumer purchasing decisions, it was found that social media marketing strategies have a positive and significant effect on increasing brand awareness. In line with the research conducted by Murdana and Suryawardani (2019) This study examines the influence of Instagram social media marketing on brand trust in PT Dealpro Indonesia concludes that social media marketing strategies have an impact on increasing brand awareness. The results of this study stated that social media marketing has a significant positive effect on Brand Awareness. Shows that H4 is acceptable and in accordance with previous research

5. The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions

The results of the pathway test showed that Social Media Marketing (X2) had a positive and significant influence on Purchase Decision (Y), with a coefficient value of 0.254, t-statistic of 2.627, and p-value of 0.009. This value shows that the higher the level of consumer awareness of a brand, the greater the tendency of consumers to make purchase transactions. On social media, Mitrakuli displays functional benefits such as ease of access to information, product catalogs, The findings are in line with the results of previous research by Song & Yoo, (Song & Yoo, 2016) Related to the influence of each stage in the marketing strategy through social media on consumer decisions in buying

This study successfully confirms that SMM is highly related to the purchase decision because if SMM experiences an increase in traffic, the more likely it is to buy. The statement of each X1 indicator has a total mean value of 3.9 so it can be said that the majority of respondents agree with the statement on variable X2, this is because the majority of respondents as many as 68.4% are generations X and Z. Where this generation is currently the most user of social media to find information, in line with what has been done Mitrakuli.id. Thus, it can be concluded that Social Media Marketing is one of the elements that influences purchase decisions. From the results of the study, H5 which states that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions is declared valid and supports previous research.

6. The Influence of Word Of Mouth on Purchase Decisions through Brand Awareness

The results of the indirect variable X1 test also showed a significant indirect influence on the variable (Y) through the variable (Z). with a NOS of 0.073, with a statistical t of 2.415 and a p value of 0.016, reinforcing that this mediating effect is statistically significant. This means that when customers receive information or recommendations from others, it not only improves their perception of mitrakuli.id brand but also encourages stronger purchasing decisions.

In the context of project tool rental services, this becomes very relevant because customers tend to choose service providers whose names are already known and remembered. Recommendations from fellow contractors are very likely when viewed from 96.8% of tenants' domicile in East Java. Recommendations that are created directly from trusted sources such as colleagues who work in one field have much higher credibility, because information is considered more based on positive experiences that have been experienced, then the information will be easier to receive, process, and stored in memory, thus increasing the likelihood that the brand will be remembered when needed. Consumers tend to trust information that comes from the people closest to them (Ismail, 2022).

WOM also has a widespread spreading effect through a multiplier effect mechanism, where a single positive experience can trigger a chain conversation that reaches more people. This effect increases the direct dissemination of information and increases the chances of the brand being remembered by other potential customers more broadly. In addition, when a brand is often mentioned and recommended by many people, a strong form of social validation emerges. Consumers feel safer and more confident in choosing the brand, as more and more people are already aware of its quality. Therefore, WOM is effective in strengthening brand recall in customer brand awareness.

Brand recall has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. Brands with strong brand recalls will automatically be included in the 'evoked set' or list of brands that are considered when consumers need project tool rentals. A brand that is easy to remember and has a positive perception, Consumers feel safer choosing a brand that is familiar and proven to be reliable. In an industry that often requires quick decisions, a strong brand recall allows consumers to make more efficient choices, reducing time and effort for research and evaluation. Ultimately, a strong brand recall will greatly influence consumer preferences and encourage them to choose the brand over competitors, as consumers tend to choose brands that they remember and trust. Based on this study, H6 which states that there is a positive and significant influence of Word of Mouth on purchase decisions with the role of Brand Awareness mediation is proven to be acceptable and supports the findings of previous studies.

7. The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions through Brand Awareness

The results of the indirect influence test showed that the variable (X2) had a direct and significant effect on the variable (Y) through the variable (Z). O of 0.107 indicates the magnitude of the mediation effect, with a statistical t value of 2.132 and a p value

of 0.033. A p-value below 0.05 indicates that Brand Awareness plays a significant mediator in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decisions. This shows that marketing strategies through social media, can increase brand awareness which ultimately impacts purchasing decisions by consumers. It can be seen from table 1.4 about the Competitor Analysis of social media TikTok and Instagram mitrakuli.id explains that the total engagement of mitrakuli.id is above the average competitor of 16% and it can also be seen that the addition of followers is 77 people in a period of 30 days.

Social media exposure plays an important role in shaping brand recall, starting with the frequency and consistency of exposure on social media, both through organic and paid posts, the greater the likelihood that the Mitrakuli brand will be remembered by customers, with the presence of attractive visual content and easy and relevant information such as content that contains about the Mitrakuli Company itself starting from the office location, products, services and also the condition of the equipment that is rented, bridging the initial stage where customers begin to get to know Mitrakuli, most customers will interact on Mitrakuli's social media by commenting, direct message and even directly contacting contact persons on social media, so that it can consolidate the Mitrakuli brand that is easy to access and remember spontaneously, when consumers are faced with the need to rent project tools, then brand with brand Strong recall can be a consideration from customers who encourage them to make a purchase Where these results are in line with research (Handono & Madiawati, 2021) Discussing how social media influences purchasing decisions through the role of Brand Awareness as a mediator. From the results of the analysis, it is known that H7 which mentions that marketing through social media has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions is acceptable.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing both have positive and significant effects on Brand Awareness and Purchase Decisions for Mitrakuli.id, with all seven hypotheses confirmed. Specifically, Brand Awareness significantly mediates the influence of Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions. These findings highlight the importance of integrating traditional and digital marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility and drive consumer buying behavior in the project equipment rental industry. For future research, it is suggested to explore additional factors such as price sensitivity, service quality, or customer satisfaction as mediators or moderators to provide a more comprehensive understanding of purchase decision drivers in this market.

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