

ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has encouraged telecommunications companies such as Telkomsel to leverage social media marketing as one of their strategies to retain and attract new customers amidst increasingly fierce competition. Although Telkomsel still leads the market with the largest number of customers in Indonesia, its customer growth rate has remained relatively stagnant compared to competitors like Indosat. This situation raises questions about how effective Telkomsel's social media marketing strategy is in influencing customers' purchase intentions, especially considering trust issues resulting from past service and data security incidents.

This study aims to analyze the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention for Telkomsel's products, with trust as a mediating variable. The research questions encompass customers' perceptions of Telkomsel's social media marketing, their level of trust, purchase intention, as well as the direct and indirect effects among these variables. This study addresses gaps in previous research that reported inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between trust, social media marketing, and purchase intention.

The study employed a quantitative method with a causal research design. Data were collected through an online questionnaire completed by 160 respondents who had previously seen Telkomsel's social media marketing. Data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to examine direct and mediation relationships among the variables.

The results indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on trust, and both social media marketing and trust have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention for Telkomsel's products. Trust is proven to mediate the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention, indicating that trust plays a crucial role in strengthening the effectiveness of Telkomsel's digital marketing strategy. These findings highlight that relevant, engaging content and transparent information delivery on social media can enhance trust and encourage purchasing decisions.

This research contributes to the development of social media marketing literature, particularly within the telecommunications industry, and provides practical recommendations for Telkomsel to improve content quality, customer engagement, and information reliability on digital platforms. Furthermore, this study suggests that Telkomsel should be more responsive in addressing data security issues to maintain consumer trust, which can not only strengthen customer loyalty but also increase purchase intentions and enhance the company's competitiveness in the telecommunications market.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Purchase Intention, Trust, Telkomsel.