



Catalyzing Pro-Social Purchases through Digital Brand Visibility: Insights from Bali's Ethical Enterprise

Tjokorda Gde Agung Wijaya Kesuma Suryawan^{1*} | Dayu Kade Indah Pratiwi¹ |

I Wayan Meryawan¹ | I Komang Putra²

1. Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Ngurah Rai, Denpasar, Indonesia

2. Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Warmadewa, Denpasar, Indonesia

Corresponding author: Tjokorda Gde Agung Wijaya Kesuma Suryawan: tjokorda.suryawan@unr.ac.id

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Abstract. Ethical consumption is increasingly viewed as a behavioural driver of inclusive economic development. This study examines the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase intention in the context of Beyond Organic (B'Onic), a micro-enterprise in Buleleng, Bali, which integrates social values into its commercial operations. Despite promoting ethical purchasing by funding a child welfare foundation, the enterprise struggles with declining consumer engagement due to weak brand visibility and limited digital interaction. The research explores the direct impact of social media marketing on purchase intention, the effect of brand awareness on purchase intention, and the mediating role of brand awareness in this relationship. Employing a quantitative approach, the study involved 110 purposively selected respondents, with data analysed using structural equation modelling. Findings reveal that social media marketing significantly enhances both brand awareness and purchase intention, with brand awareness acting as a substantial mediator. This study contributes to the literature on ethically positioned enterprise communication and offers practical insights for micro-enterprises seeking to scale social impact through digital strategies, strengthening their role in sustainable economic development.

Keywords: ethical consumption; social media marketing; brand awareness; purchase intention consumer behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) serve as vital catalysts for economic development and inclusive growth, especially within emerging markets, as emphasised by Abdul-Azeez et al. (2024) and Suryawan, Pratiwi, et al. (2024). These enterprises are integral to job creation, poverty alleviation, and local innovation, acting as stabilisers within national economies. In Indonesia, the economic contribution of MSMEs is particularly pronounced, playing a pivotal role in sustaining employment and contributing to national GDP (Suryawan et al., 2025). This relevance is acutely felt in rural and semi-urban areas such as Buleleng, Bali, where MSMEs, especially those embedded within the agricultural sector, form the backbone of community livelihoods. However, their increasing numbers have led to heightened competition and market saturation, posing significant challenges to visibility, consumer retention, and long-term business viability (Bilali, 2022).

A representative case is Beyond Organic (B'Onic), a micro-enterprise based in Buleleng,

which combines commercial pursuits with a philanthropic mission. B'Onic markets organic agricultural products while channelling profits to support the *Ananda Seva Dharma* Social Welfare Institute for Children, positioning consumer purchases as socially impactful actions. As described by Kumar (2024) and Utting (2019), such a model transforms routine consumer behaviour into ethical consumption. Yet, despite its compelling value proposition, B'Onic has encountered persistent barriers in brand awareness, digital visibility, and customer acquisition. Sales information indicate erratic trends, declines during religious festivities and surges during community events, highlighting a reliance on offline, non-scalable marketing approaches. These trends, supported by Haris (2024) and Amrita et al. (2024), echo global findings on the necessity of consistent digital presence for brand building and consumer trust.

Further probing into B'Onic's digital strategy exposed fundamental limitations. A majority of respondents, according to qualitative interviews, were unaware of the brand or struggled to recall its presence in the digital landscape. This lack of recall is emblematic of a broader challenge confronting MSMEs in developing economies, including insufficient digital literacy, resource constraints, and an underdeveloped strategic approach to online branding (Dunggio & Basri, 2023; Hendrawan et al., 2024). Although B'ONIC maintains a presence on Instagram, content was published irregularly, and interactions with followers were minimal. Consumers expressed discontent with the platform's inactivity, citing a lack of storytelling, promotional events, and meaningful dialogue. As Kent & Taylor (2021) suggest, social media's true power lies not just in message dissemination but in fostering community-driven conversations.

This challenge was illustrated during a promotional bazaar organised at B'Onic's headquarters. Despite the event's potential to enhance both offline and online visibility, it was only promoted through printed flyers, excluding digital audiences entirely. This oversight deprived the enterprise of a valuable opportunity to activate its online community and illustrates the importance of omnichannel integration in marketing strategies, particularly for socially-driven micro-enterprises (Mossberger et al., 2022; Wu, 2024). These empirical shortcomings expose a theoretical gap concerning the interface between social media, ethical consumption, and brand cognition. While established literature, including Suryawan, Purwati, et al. (2024) and Yousafzai (2024), emphasise social media's role in branding, fewer studies explore its influence on pro-social consumer behaviours (Lysenstøen et al., 2021). Some scholars, such as Muharam et al. (2024) and Gupta (2023), advocate that digital engagement boosts brand recall and consumer trust, while others warn of diminishing impact due to oversaturation, scepticism, and information fatigue (Dai et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2020).

Brand awareness, in this context, is understood as a multi-layered construct that contributes significantly to consumer decision-making processes. As Ngo et al. (2021) and Bruce et al. (2020) argue, high brand salience increases the probability of a brand entering a consumer's consideration set, particularly in saturated markets. Nevertheless, in the domain of socially motivated consumption, awareness alone may not translate to purchase behaviour. Scholars such as Bulmer et al. (2024) and Shoenberger et al. (2021) argue that affective components, such as perceived authenticity and emotional resonance, can outweigh mere recognition, especially when a disconnect exists between the brand's social claims and its communication strategies. Thus, this study seeks to explore two interrelated inquiries: firstly, how social media engagement triggers pro-social purchasing behaviours, and secondly, the mediating function of brand awareness in this relationship.

Employing B'Onic as a focal case study, the research combines theoretical insights from digital marketing, ethical branding, and consumer psychology with empirical data gathered from interviews and field observation. This approach enables the formulation of a context-sensitive yet globally relevant model. Drawing on Alamsyah & Febriani (2020), the

framework positions brand awareness not as a passive mnemonic device but as a dynamic mediator capable of influencing the ethical orientation of consumer choices. This reinterpretation is particularly valuable for MSMEs, which often operate with constrained budgets and limited access to advanced marketing expertise. By articulating cost-effective, high-impact strategies for social media branding, the study offers a pathway for mission-driven enterprises to elevate their visibility and social resonance in digital marketplaces. From a methodological standpoint, the research adopts a multidisciplinary lens, integrating qualitative stakeholder interviews with critical theoretical synthesis. This dual approach enhances both the academic depth and practical relevance of the findings. To ensure longevity and cross-contextual applicability, the study refrains from tethering its insights to specific years or events. This temporal neutrality, as suggested by contemporary scholarly practices, allows the research to maintain relevance across academic cycles and evolving digital environments.

The study aims to make a substantive contribution to the expanding literature on ethical consumerism and digital branding by demonstrating how MSMEs can utilise social media as a strategic tool to activate pro-social purchasing behaviours. It presents a balanced assessment of opportunities and limitations, positioning brand awareness as a mediating mechanism within this dynamic. Through its blend of empirical depth and conceptual sophistication, the research aspires to serve as a foundational resource for socially conscious businesses navigating increasingly competitive and digitised economic landscapes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), as articulated by Arnould & Thompson (2005), offers a culturally situated perspective on consumer behaviour. Rather than treating consumption as a merely functional or rational act, CCT conceptualises it as a socially embedded process through which individuals construct meaning, express identity, and negotiate value. In the context of ethical micro-enterprises such as B'Onic, which channels its commercial revenue into child welfare initiatives, CCT helps to unpack how consumers interpret and respond to the brand's moral positioning. Research suggests that when consumers perceive alignment between a brand's ethical claims and their own value systems, they are more likely to engage in pro-social purchasing behaviours (Deep, 2023; Prihatiningrum et al., 2024). Furthermore, in digital settings, ethical consumption becomes performative, as consumers often use brand affiliation to signal moral identity within their social networks (Raimondo et al., 2022). Thus, CCT provides a theoretical foundation for analysing how ethical narratives embedded in digital marketing content contribute to brand awareness and influence consumer purchase intention.

Digital Engagement

While CCT emphasises cultural and symbolic dimensions, Digital Engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014) complements this view by addressing the behavioural and psychological mechanisms underpinning consumer interaction with digital content. Digital engagement is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive processing, emotional involvement, and participatory behaviour. It is particularly relevant in the context of micro-enterprises, which often lack access to large-scale marketing budgets and instead rely on organic interaction to cultivate brand loyalty. For socially driven brands like B'Onic, digital engagement not only enhances online visibility but also facilitates trust and community building, key factors in shaping positive brand perceptions (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Moreover, high-quality, interactive content can foster deeper consumer involvement and stimulate purchase intention, especially when ethical messaging is consistently delivered

and perceived as authentic (Chowdhury, 2024).

Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

Social Media Marketing is defined as the strategic practice of developing content for social platforms to promote products and services, cultivate an engaged community, and drive traffic to a business (Jindal, 2020; Shukla & Agarwal, 2024). For a micro-enterprise like B'Onic, which operates with a pro-social mission, SMM is not merely a promotional tool but a vital mechanism for communicating its ethical values and connecting with a socially conscious audience. Brand awareness, conversely, is a cognitive outcome, representing a brand's strength in a consumer's memory and their ability to recall and recognise its key elements, such as its name, logo, and slogan (Bergkvist & Taylor, 2022). A robust body of literature posits that a well-executed SMM strategy directly enhances this cognitive presence. Consistent and engaging content, frequent updates, and interactive communication build top-of-mind brand recall and recognition (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). Previous empirical work has confirmed this relationship, demonstrating a positive and significant influence of Social Media Marketing on brand awareness (Angelyn & Kodrat, 2021). Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Social media marketing contributes to increased levels of brand awareness within the context of B'Onic.

Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention

Brand awareness is a fundamental prerequisite for consumer decision-making and a cornerstone of effective branding (García & Yábar, 2023). In a competitive market, a brand that is easily recognised and recalled is more likely to be included in a consumer's consideration set, thereby increasing the probability of a purchase. Brand awareness reduces the cognitive effort required to evaluate a product, as consumers tend to trust and prefer familiar brands over unfamiliar ones (Rahinel et al., 2021). This principle is particularly relevant for pro-social businesses, where awareness of the brand's ethical mission is the first step towards building the trust required to motivate an altruistic purchase. Purchase intention itself is an attitudinal measure that reflects a consumer's willingness and likelihood to buy a product or service in the future, influenced by their perception, evaluation, and preferences (Rahaman et al., 2022). A significant body of research supports this causal link, with studies consistently showing that a higher level of brand awareness leads to a greater purchase intention (Chen, 2024; Kerse, 2023). Hence, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Enhanced brand awareness is associated with stronger consumer intention to purchase products offered by B'Onic.

Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

Social Media Marketing can also have a direct and powerful influence on a consumer's purchase intention. It is a dynamic tool used to build brand recognition and prompt consumer action, both directly and indirectly (Sushma et al., 2023). Through strategic advertising, compelling content, direct-response promotions, and calls-to-action, social media platforms can bypass traditional stages of the marketing funnel and trigger an immediate desire to purchase (Sharma, 2020). This is especially true for micro-enterprises, where social media often serves as the primary channel for showcasing product quality, communicating value propositions, and engaging in direct commerce. Consumers' exposure to engaging social media content can create a sense of brand attraction and urgency, which directly translates into a heightened intention to acquire the product (McClure & Seock, 2020). Previous research has provided robust evidence for this direct link, with findings suggesting that more effective social media content correlates with a higher purchase intention (McClure & Seock, 2020; Mu, 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Social media marketing initiatives influence the likelihood that consumers will express purchase intention toward B’Onic’s offerings.

The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness

While both Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness can directly influence purchase intention, this study posits a more nuanced relationship: that the effect of Social Media Marketing on purchase intention is, in part, mediated by Brand Awareness. This mediation hypothesis argues that SMM's primary function is to first build a strong cognitive presence in the consumer's mind (H1), and it is this heightened awareness that subsequently drives the intention to purchase (H2). In other words, Social Media Marketing is the strategic activity, Brand Awareness is the crucial cognitive outcome, and Purchase Intention is the behavioural result. Without the mediating role of a well-established brand presence, the influence of social media content on purchasing behaviour can be diminished or even lost in the vast digital noise (Liu et al., 2021). This mediational pathway provides a deeper theoretical explanation for the underlying mechanism of the relationship. Research by Iqbal et al. (2024) has previously confirmed this mediating role, highlighting that brand awareness is a critical bridge connecting a brand's digital efforts to a consumer's ultimate decision to buy. Consequently, the final hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H4: Brand Awareness mediates the effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention in B’Onic.

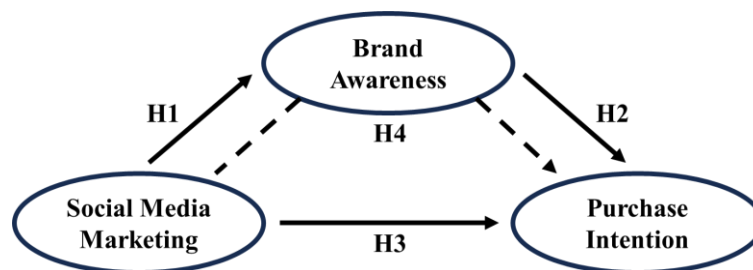


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

Source: Theoretical review and previous research findings

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework for this study. The model hypothesises direct effects of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness (H1) and Purchase Intention (H3), as well as a direct effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention (H2). Furthermore, Brand Awareness is proposed to mediate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention (H4).

3. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design, grounded in the positivist epistemological paradigm, to examine the interrelationships among Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention. An associative approach was adopted, as the primary objective of this research was not to merely describe the constructs under investigation, but to empirically test the directional linkages among them. The associative approach is methodologically relevant in this context because it enables the systematic assessment of causal inferences and the strength of relationships between variables, which is central to understanding how social media marketing activities influence consumer behavioural outcomes (Bühlmann, 2020).

Purposive sampling was utilised to select participants from the accessible population who possessed prior awareness of the B’Onic brand. This non-probability technique ensured congruence between respondent characteristics and the research objectives, prioritising contextual relevance over generalisability. Inclusion criteria required participants to be at

least 17 years of age and demonstrably familiar with the brand and its product offerings.

Data were obtained via a structured questionnaire comprising 21 items designed to measure three latent constructs operationalised through 11 indicators. Each indicator was measured using multiple items to enhance construct reliability and validity. Drawing on the ten-times rule and a respondent-to-item ratio of 5:1 to 10:1 (Hair et al., 2022), a sample size of 110 respondents was deemed methodologically sound. The upper bound was intentionally adopted to ensure statistical power, increase estimation precision, and facilitate robust analytical results within the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) framework. Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The integrated assessment of both measurement and structural models confirms sound indicator reliability, robust construct validity, and well-defined structural relationships. Figure 2 illustrates how these empirical results establish a solid foundation for hypothesis testing while simultaneously clarifying the theoretical linkages among latent variables, thereby enhancing the overall interpretative depth and coherence of the proposed research framework.

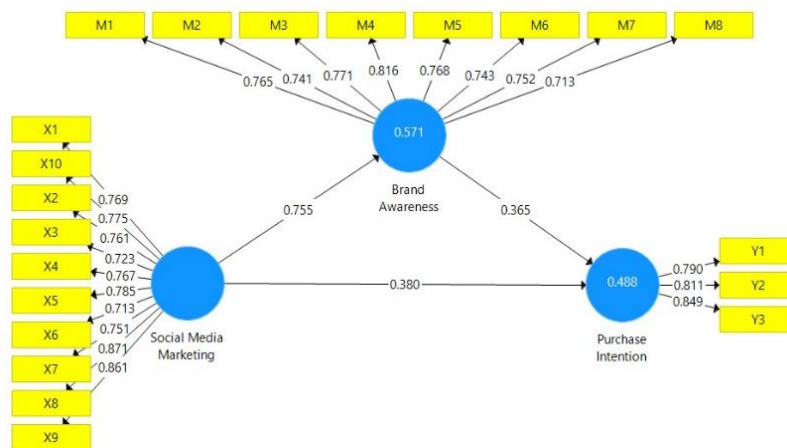


Figure 2. Measurement and Structural Model Output
Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Measurement Model

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity, a key criterion for assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), was evaluated by examining the loading factors of the indicators and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (Ghozali, 2018). The findings, as presented in Table 1 and Table 2, demonstrate that all constructs met the requisite thresholds for convergent validity. These results indicate that the measurement items effectively represent their respective latent variables, providing a solid foundation for further structural analysis. This confirms the suitability of the measurement model for accurately capturing the theoretical concepts under investigation.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test Results based on Outer-Loadings

Variables	Indicators & Items	Outer Loadings	Threshold	Status
Social Media Marketing (X)				
Entertainment				
(Oktriyanto et al., 2021)	X1	0.769	0.70	Valid
	X2	0.761	0.70	Valid
Interaction				

		X3	0.723	0.70	Valid
		X4	0.767	0.70	Valid
	Trendness				
		X5	0.785	0.70	Valid
		X6	0.713	0.70	Valid
	Customisation				
		X7	0.751	0.70	Valid
		X8	0.871	0.70	Valid
	Advertisement				
		X9	0.861	0.70	Valid
		X10	0.775	0.70	Valid
	Top of Mind				
		M1	0.765	0.70	Valid
		M2	0.741	0.70	Valid
	Brand Recall				
		M3	0.771	0.70	Valid
		M4	0.816	0.70	Valid
	Brand Recognition				
		M5	0.768	0.70	Valid
		M6	0.743	0.70	Valid
	Unaware of Brand				
		M7	0.752	0.70	Valid
		M8	0.713	0.70	Valid
	Interest				
		Y1	0.790	0.70	Valid
	Attending				
		Y2	0.811	0.70	Valid
	Information				
		Y3	0.849	0.70	Valid

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 1, all indicator loadings for social media marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention were statistically significant and exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming strong internal consistency. Furthermore, Table 2 indicates that all constructs had average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE	Threshold	Status
Social Media Marketing	0.752	0.50	Valid
Brand Awareness	0.637	0.50	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.600	0.50	Valid

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Collectively, the robust loading factors and the satisfactory AVE values provide compelling evidence that the constructs in this research possess high convergent validity, affirming the quality and reliability of the measurement model. Consequently, the research is well-positioned to proceed with the assessment of discriminant validity and the testing of the structural model hypotheses.

Discriminant Validity

Following the establishment of convergent validity, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was assessed. Discriminant validity, which ensures empirical distinction between constructs, was assessed through cross-loading analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results based on Cross-Loadings

Items	Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
M1	0.765	0.470	0.550
M2	0.741	0.482	0.582
M3	0.771	0.550	0.630

M4	0.816	0.523	0.569
M5	0.768	0.461	0.553
M6	0.743	0.467	0.624
M7	0.752	0.375	0.471
M8	0.713	0.590	0.574
X1	0.530	0.444	0.769
X2	0.525	0.436	0.761
X3	0.480	0.411	0.723
X4	0.673	0.482	0.767
X5	0.580	0.558	0.785
X6	0.497	0.591	0.713
X7	0.575	0.508	0.751
X8	0.659	0.568	0.871
X9	0.656	0.549	0.861
X10	0.661	0.529	0.775
Y1	0.459	0.790	0.510
Y2	0.652	0.811	0.622
Y3	0.437	0.849	0.433

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

The results unequivocally demonstrates that all indicators exhibit their highest loading on their respective parent constructs, a key requirement for establishing discriminant validity (Ghozali, 2018). This consistent pattern across all indicators provides robust evidence that each latent variable is conceptually and empirically distinct.

Internal Consistency Reliability

The internal consistency of the measurement model was assessed by evaluating both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Ghozali, 2018). All constructs in the study were found to have values well above the recommended threshold of 0.70 for both metrics, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Internal Consistency Test Results based on Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability
Social Media Marketing	0.928	0.939
Brand Awareness	0.895	0.916
Purchase Intention	0.756	0.857

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Structural Model

Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination (R²) measures the proportion of a construct’s variance that is explained by its predictor constructs. It serves as an indicator of the model's predictive power for a specific endogenous variable. The predictive accuracy of the model is typically categorised based on the R² value: 0.25 indicates a weak predictive power, 0.50 signifies a moderate power, and 0.75 represents a strong predictive power (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 5. R² Test Results

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Status
Brand Awareness	0.571	0.567	Moderate
Purchase Intention	0.488	0.478	Moderate

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 5, the R² value for Brand Awareness is 0.571, signifying that 57.1% of its variance is explained by Social Media Marketing. For Purchase Intention, the R² value is 0.488, indicating that 48.8% of its variance is explained by Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness. Both results demonstrate a moderate predictive power, affirming the model's satisfactory explanatory capability. The moderate predictive power highlights the significance of the included variables while also acknowledging the presence of other

unobserved factors that may influence consumer behaviour.

Analysis of Effect Size (F^2)

The effect size (f^2) was calculated to measure the substantive impact of each predictor on its endogenous construct. An f^2 value of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represents small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 6. f^2 Test Results

	Purchase Intention	Social Media	Brand Awareness
Brand Awareness	0.112		
Social Media Marketing	0.121		1.328
Purchase Intention			

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 6, Social Media Marketing has a large effect on Brand Awareness ($f^2 = 1.328$). Conversely, its direct influence on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.121$), as well as the effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.112$), are both modest, approaching a medium magnitude. These findings highlight the significant influence of social media marketing on brand awareness, with a more modest impact on purchase intention.

Evaluation of Model Fit

The overall model fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which assesses the discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations. This metric is a key indicator of model fit, with a value below 0.10 typically signifying an acceptable fit for PLS-SEM models (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 7. Model Fit Evaluation Results

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,085	0,085

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 7, the SRMR value for the estimated model is 0.085. This value is below the acceptable threshold of 0.10, thereby providing strong evidence that the research model fits the empirical data well. This satisfactory model fit ensures that the subsequent hypothesis testing is conducted within a robust and reliable framework.

Hypotheses Testing (Bootstrapping Analysis)

Figure 3 presents the final structural model following the bootstrapping procedure, illustrating the tested relationships and their statistical significance. The evaluation was based on the path coefficient (original sample), t-statistic, and p-value, using a significance level of 0.05. A path is considered statistically significant if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 or if the p-value is less than 0.05 (Ghozali, 2018).

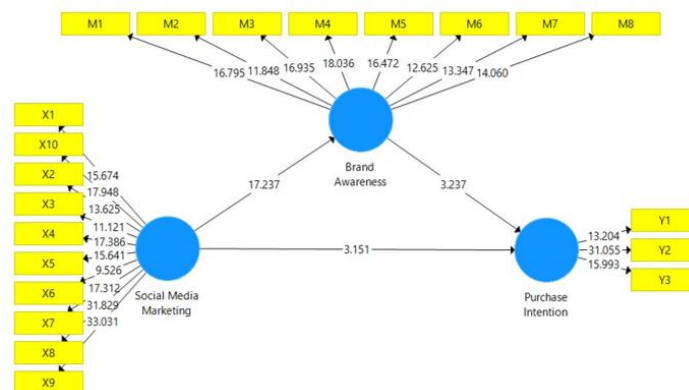


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Model

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

As shown in Table 8, all three hypotheses were supported. Social media marketing had

a significant effect on purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.380, a t-statistic of 3.151, and a p-value of 0.002. It also significantly influenced brand awareness, with a path coefficient of 0.755, a t-statistic of 17.237, and a p-value of 0.000. In addition, brand awareness significantly affected purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.365, a t-statistic of 3.237, and a p-value of 0.001.

Table 8. Direct Effects

Direct Effect	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Social Media Marketing => Purchase Intention	0.380	3.151	0.002
Social Media Marketing => Brand Awareness	0.755	17.237	0.000
Brand Awareness => Purchase Intention	0.365	3.237	0.001

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

The mediating role of brand awareness was confirmed through the indirect effect of social media marketing on purchase intention. As shown in Table 9, the indirect path coefficient was 0.276, with a t-statistic of 3.171 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating a significant mediation effect.

Table 9. Indirect Effect

Direct Effect	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Social Media Marketing => Brand Awareness => Purchase Intention	0.276	3.171	0.002

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Since both the direct effect of social media marketing on purchase intention and the indirect effect via brand awareness were statistically significant and positive, the mediation is classified as complementary partial mediation (Hair et al., 2022). This indicates that the indirect path operates alongside the direct effect, contributing separately to the overall relationship.

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness

The empirical findings indicate that social media marketing exerts a substantial and statistically significant influence on brand awareness. This outcome aligns with previous empirical studies (Angelyn & Kodrat, 2021; Dabbous & Barakat, 2020), confirming that consistent, interactive, and ethically positioned digital content can strengthen consumers' cognitive recognition of a brand. From a theoretical perspective, Consumer Culture Theory offers a compelling explanation: consumers do not merely receive brand messages passively; rather, they interpret these messages through cultural lenses that shape meaning, identity, and value construction (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In the case of B'ONIC, a brand rooted in social impact, its online content functions not only as product promotion but as a cultural artefact that invites value-aligned engagement. Ethical narratives shared through social platforms resonate with consumers who seek moral coherence in their consumption choices, thereby enhancing brand recall and recognition. This suggests that brand awareness is not solely driven by frequency of exposure, but also by the symbolic and moral depth of the content communicated.

The Role of Brand Awareness in Shaping Purchase Intention

The results further demonstrate a positive and statistically significant relationship

between brand awareness and purchase intention. This finding reinforces the theoretical premise that brand familiarity reduces perceived risk, facilitates trust, and simplifies the decision-making process (Chen, 2024; Kerse, 2023; Rahinel et al., 2021). When consumers can easily recall and recognise a brand, especially one associated with ethical values such as B'Onic, they are more likely to include it in their consideration set and proceed toward a purchase. Moreover, Consumer Culture Theory supports this dynamic by suggesting that recognition of an ethically positioned brand helps consumers affirm their own moral identities. In this sense, purchase intention is not merely transactional, but performative, serving as a signal of the consumer's value system within their social networks. Brand awareness, then, operates as both a cognitive anchor and a social cue that facilitates prosocial consumption.

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

The analysis also reveals that social media marketing exerts a direct effect on purchase intention (McClure & Seock, 2020; Mu, 2023), albeit with a smaller effect size relative to its influence on brand awareness. This supports prior findings by Sharma (2020), which argue that digital content can trigger purchase behaviours without necessarily passing through extensive cognitive processing. From the lens of Digital Engagement, this relationship may be attributed to the multidimensional nature of digital interaction, where consumers engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally with content (Hollebeek et al., 2014). High-quality content delivered through social platforms can evoke emotional responses and prompt participatory behaviours (e.g., shares, likes, or direct messages), which, in turn, foster psychological readiness to make a purchase. For brands like B'Onic, which embed ethical messaging within visually compelling narratives, this digital engagement may serve as a catalyst for socially motivated purchase decisions.

Mediating Role of Brand Awareness

The mediation analysis confirms that brand awareness serves as a significant intermediary in the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. This indicates that while social media efforts can independently influence consumer behaviour, their effectiveness is amplified when they first establish cognitive salience in the minds of consumers. This finding is corroborated by prior studies (Iqbal et al., 2024), which have similarly established the mediating role of brand awareness in comparable contexts, further reinforcing its significance as a fundamental behavioural driver of economic activity. This mediational pathway also aligns with both theoretical perspectives. From the viewpoint of Consumer Culture Theory, awareness functions as a platform through which consumers evaluate brand meaning, assess moral alignment, and negotiate identity. Meanwhile, Digital Engagement Theory suggests that active and consistent engagement enhances brand memory structures, enabling consumers to transition more fluidly from exposure to behavioural intent. As such, the presence of brand awareness in the causal chain reinforces the strategic importance of cultivating digital familiarity prior to influencing transactional outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study unequivocally affirms the hypothesised relationships, firmly establishing the critical role of social media marketing in enhancing both brand awareness and purchase intention within the unique operational context of B'Onic, a socially oriented micro-enterprise. The empirical findings robustly demonstrate that social media marketing exerts a direct and significant influence on consumer purchase intention, while concurrently elevating brand awareness as a pivotal mediating construct. Notably, the mediating role of brand awareness amplifies the efficacy of social media efforts by fostering cognitive recognition and ethical resonance, thereby catalysing pro-social consumer behaviour.

Theoretically, this study contributes substantively to the advancement of Consumer Culture Theory and Digital Engagement Theory, particularly in the domain of ethical micro-enterprise branding. By elucidating how digital content functions not merely as an informational tool but as a symbolic mechanism for moral alignment and identity construction, the research highlights the complex interplay between digital engagement and ethical consumption. From a practical perspective, the findings offer actionable guidance for micro-enterprises aiming to harness social media platforms, emphasizing the need for consistent, authentic, and value-driven communication strategies that foster consumer trust, stimulate purchase intention, and ultimately contribute to the broader goal of economic development.

Future research should expand the current model by integrating variables such as trust, value congruence, or platform-specific behavioural patterns. Longitudinal designs and behavioural tracking could further enrich understanding of sustained digital engagement. Investigating these dynamics across diverse geographic and sectoral contexts would provide valuable comparative insights into the digital branding practices of ethical micro-enterprises.

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