

What Makes Consumers Buy Pet Food? A Study on Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Brand Credibility, and Brand Trust toward Purchase Intention for Kitchen Flavor Dry Dog Food

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Abstract: This research investigates the influence of social media marketing, brand image, brand credibility, and brand trust on consumers' purchase intention toward Kitchen Flavor dry dog food in Indonesia. A quantitative research design was applied, using online questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The measurement model was tested using PLS-SEM through SmartPLS 3.0 to assess reliability, validity, and the explanatory power of the proposed framework. The findings show that brand image significantly affects purchase intention, indicating that consumers' perception of product quality, nutritional benefits, and overall brand reputation plays a key role in their buying decisions. However, social media marketing, brand credibility, and brand trust were found to have no significant direct effect on purchase intention. The structural model demonstrates that 61.3% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by the four predictors. These results highlight that while social media engagement and brand-related perceptions contribute to shaping consumer attitudes, the most influential factor driving purchase intention for Kitchen Flavor is a strong and positive brand image. The study provides implications for pet food brands to enhance brand positioning through value-driven communication, product transparency, and strategic digital engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The development of Indonesia's pet food industry has demonstrated significant growth in recent years. The surge in pet ownership particularly among dog owners has driven increasing demand for high-quality dog food products. According to Winner Research (2024), the market value of Indonesia's dog food industry has surpassed IDR 3.9 trillion and is projected to continue rising in line with the growing pet population. Between 2016 and 2022, the number of pet dogs increased from 459,100 to 737,400, and it is expected to exceed 900,000 by 2026. This upward trend presents substantial opportunities for brands such as Kitchen Flavor to expand their market

share.

On the other hand, social media usage has also increased dramatically. DataReportal (2025) reports that Indonesians spend an average of 188 minutes per day on social media far above the global average. Instagram and TikTok have emerged as the most dominant platforms for interactions related to pet products, including reviews, recommendations, and educational content on canine nutrition. Consequently, social media has become a strategic marketing channel capable of shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions.

Kitchen Flavor is a premium dog food brand available in various formulations, including Grain Free and Special Care Urinary, specifically designed to meet the nutritional needs of pets. Its products are made from high-quality ingredients such as real meat, are grain-free, pork-free, and formulated to support digestive health, coat condition, eye health, and urinary function in both dogs and cats. However, in the context of dog food products like Kitchen Flavor, this study specifically examines the relationships among social media marketing, brand image, brand credibility, and brand trust in driving consumer purchase intention. This highlights the need for an in-depth investigation into how these four variables influence consumers' intention to purchase Kitchen Flavor dog food products.

This research is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). TRA explains that an individual's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior, which is influenced by two main factors: attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. In the context of digital marketing, consumers' purchase intention for a product such as Kitchen Flavor dog food is shaped by their evaluation of the product's benefits and brand reputation (attitude), as well as social influence derived from online communities and social media (subjective norms). Social Media Marketing (SMM) activities can strengthen both factors through engaging, interactive, and authentic content that enhances brand image, credibility, and trust. Thus, the Theory of Reasoned Action provides a relevant framework for understanding how consumers' psychological processes in forming purchase intentions can be influenced by SMM strategies and their perceptions of the brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has become an essential tool for marketing professionals, as it allows them to gain insights into the preferences and interests of their target audience. This enables companies to design more personalized and relevant advertisements that match consumer expectations. Through various social media channels, businesses can also communicate and engage more easily with potential customers, delivering promotional messages directly to the intended audience. The main purpose of these advertisements is to draw consumer attention, provide useful information, strengthen brand reputation, and ultimately increase purchase intention (Todi, 2008; Wang et al., 2009). Colliander et al. (2015) suggest that blogs exert a stronger influence on purchase decisions compared to online news outlets. Moreover, viral marketing efforts on Facebook have been shown to enhance brand value and image, which can lead to greater purchase intention among consumers (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). Research by Balakrishnan et al. indicates that digital advertising, online communities, and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) within social media environments positively affect consumers' intention to buy. Conversely, Schivinski and Dąbrowski (2016) found that content created by companies or users does not significantly influence purchase intention on Facebook. Despite this, Godey et al. (2016) concluded that, overall, social media marketing activities contribute positively to consumers' purchase intention.

According to Heding et al. (2008), brand image represents the set of impressions that

customers develop about a brand. Drawing on the work of Aaker and Joachimsthaler as discussed by Heding et al. (2008), brand image can be understood through three main concepts: perception, cognition, and attitude. Perception refers to how consumers experience a brand through their senses such as sight, sound, taste, or hearing. This involves the process of assigning meaning by recognizing patterns and identifying specific attributes tied to the brand. Cognition involves the stage where a brand must first be recognizable and noticeable before any message can be processed. At this point, consumers express their interpretation based on what they have identified and understood during the recognition process. Attitude encompasses the continuous evaluation consumers make as they interpret and assess the brand, eventually shaping their overall attitude toward it. A brand becomes stronger when it successfully establishes consumer associations that are more preferred, resilient, and clearly differentiated from competing brands (Heding et al., 2008). Brand image is commonly described through three dimensions: favorability, strength, and uniqueness. Favorability relates to whether consumers view the brand more positively compared to competing brands, which can influence their purchasing behavior. Strength reflects how effectively and quickly a brand is able to capture and maintain consumer attention. Uniqueness refers to the distinctive value or unique selling proposition that sets the brand apart from its competitors.

Brand credibility refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's ability to deliver on its promises consistently. In the context of pet food products such as Kitchen Flavor, credibility emerges from the brand's capacity to demonstrate product safety, ingredient quality, and truthful claims regarding nutrition and health benefits. Consumers increasingly expect transparency in product formulation such as real meat content, grain-free recipes, or functional benefits like digestive care and urinary support making credibility an essential factor in reducing perceived risk when purchasing pet food. Within this framework, social media marketing functions as the stimulus that communicates product information, reviews, and user experiences. Brand credibility acts as the organism in the consumer decision making process, shaping how customers interpret and evaluate these messages. When consumers perceive Kitchen Flavor as a trustworthy brand supported by consistent quality, clear product information, and positive testimonials they are more likely to believe that the brand's claims are authentic and reliable. High brand credibility reduces information asymmetry, especially in markets where consumers rely heavily on product claims for pet nutrition. Credible brands help customers feel more certain about the safety and nutritional value of the food they choose for their pets. This confidence plays a critical role in influencing purchase intention, as customers tend to prefer brands that demonstrate reliability, integrity, and expertise in pet nutrition. In this sense, brand credibility serves as a mediator that translates marketing communication into purchasing behavior. A credible Kitchen Flavor brand reinforces positive consumer perceptions, strengthens trust, and encourages consumers to select the brand over competitors. Thus, greater brand credibility leads to stronger purchase intention, especially in categories where product quality affects pet health and well-being.

Alfraihat et al 2025 describe trust as a consumer's willingness to depend on another party even when there is potential risk involved. In purchasing situations especially for products related to health, nutrition, and safety trust becomes a central factor influencing consumer attitudes and decisions. For pet food brands such as Kitchen Flavor, brand trust reflects the degree to which consumers believe that the brand will consistently fulfill its nutritional claims and product promises. According to Tarabieh et al., brand trust can be understood as a consumer's confidence in a brand's capability to deliver what it claims to provide. In the context of Kitchen Flavor, this includes assurances about ingredient quality, real meat content, grain-free formulations, and

specific functional benefits such as digestive or urinary support. When consumers perceive uncertainty or face information asymmetry particularly common in the pet food market trust becomes the emotional assurance that the brand will meet expectations. Building trust is essential for creating long-term competitive advantage because a brand that repeatedly delivers quality forms a durable relationship with its customers. As scholars argue, brand trust strengthens when key loyalty-driving elements such as consistent product quality, transparency, and positive experiences are present. Influencers or brand ambassadors can further support trust-building when their communication is educational, credible, and engaging, helping consumers feel more assured about choosing Kitchen Flavor. In this context, brand trust plays a decisive role in shaping purchase intention. When pet owners trust Kitchen Flavor's safety standards, ingredient claims, and nutritional benefits, they are more likely to feel confident in purchasing the product for their dogs. Thus, higher brand trust leads directly to a stronger intention to buy, as consumers prefer brands that they believe are reliable, honest, and capable of safeguarding their pets' well-being.

According to Kotler et al. (2022), purchase intention refers to an individual's internal drive to buy a product or engage in behaviors related to a purchase. This intention is often shaped by marketing stimuli, such as attractive promotional offers, which encourage consumers to move toward a purchasing commitment. Priansa (2017) explains that purchase intention reflects a strong interest and a positive attitude toward a product, leading individuals to believe in its benefits and eventually decide to make a purchase. Priansa (2017) further notes that purchase intention can be evaluated through several dimensions: Transactional Interest (the desire to make a purchasing decision), Exploratory Interest (the tendency to seek information about the product of interest), and Preferential Interest (a tendency to favor certain products as preferred options). Within the preferential dimension, any disruption or dissatisfaction with the favored product may cause consumers to shift their preference to another alternative.

RESEARCH METHOD

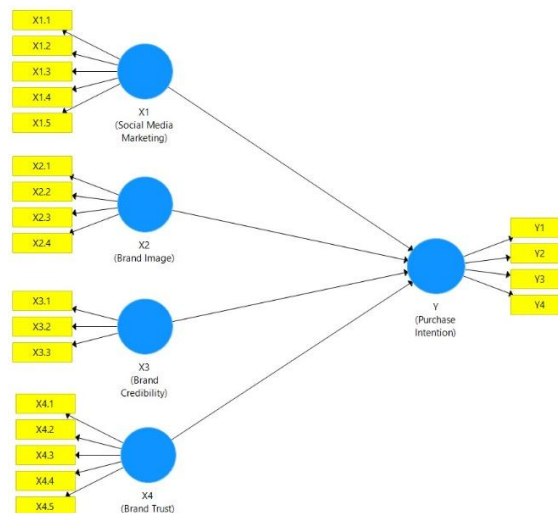


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The figure illustrates the proposed conceptual framework that examines the influence of four key marketing and branding constructs Social Media Marketing (X1), Brand Image (X2), Brand Credibility (X3), and Brand Trust (X4) on Purchase Intention (Y).

Table 1. Item Scale for the All Constructs.

Construct	Items	Sources
X1 (Social Media Marketing)	I can easily share information about Kitchen Flavor dry dog food with others through social media.	Hanadi (2023)
	I find it easy to express my opinions or experiences about the Kitchen Flavor dry dog food brand on social media.	
	Kitchen Flavor's social media content consistently provides the latest information about its dry dog food products.	
	Kitchen Flavor's social media platforms provide the information I need regarding the benefits and quality of its dry dog food.	
	I like the way Kitchen Flavor promotes and advertises its dry dog food products through social media.	
X2 (Brand Image)	Kitchen Flavor dry dog food is able to meet my dog's nutritional needs.	Hanadi (2023)
	Feeding my dog with Kitchen Flavor dry food makes me feel confident that I have chosen the right product.	
	Kitchen Flavor dry dog food is a reliable product for maintaining my dog's health.	
	Kitchen Flavor dry dog food offers quality that matches the price I pay.	
X3 (Brand Credibility)	Kitchen Flavor consistently delivers dry dog food products according to its stated claims.	Ashish (2025)
	I believe that the nutritional and functional claims made about Kitchen Flavor dry dog food are trustworthy.	
	Kitchen Flavor has a dependable reputation in the dog food market.	
X4 (Brand Trust)	I trust Kitchen Flavor as a preferred choice for dry dog food.	Alfairat (2025)
	I feel that I can fully trust Kitchen Flavor to provide high-quality dog food products.	
	I believe that Kitchen Flavor cares about its consumers, especially dog lovers.	
	I am confident that Kitchen Flavor is honest and sincere when providing information or responding to customer complaints.	
	I feel assured when purchasing Kitchen Flavor dry dog food because I trust that it will not disappoint me or my dog.	
Y (Purchase Intention)	I prefer to purchase Kitchen Flavor dry dog food over other dry dog food brands.	Hanadi (2023)
	I am willing to recommend others to buy Kitchen Flavor dry dog food.	
	I have a strong intention to buy Kitchen Flavor dry dog food in the future.	
	I would highly recommend Kitchen Flavor as a dry dog food brand to other people.	

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 100 respondents who participated in this study on the relationship between social media marketing, brand image, brand credibility, and brand trust toward consumers purchase intention of Kitchen Flavor dry dog food. The demographic data help provide an overview of the consumer profile and illustrate the diversity of respondents involved in evaluating the brand. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents 69% fall within the 26–35 years age group, indicating that most Kitchen Flavor consumers belong to the young adult segment, which is also highly active on digital platforms. Respondents aged 36–45

years account for 10%, while those aged 46 and above represent 6% and only 15% are within the 18–25 years category.

Regarding gender, 57% of respondents are male, while 43% are female, showing that ownership and purchasing responsibility for dog food products are relatively balanced but slightly dominated by male consumers. The educational background of respondents reflects a well-educated consumer base. More than half 67% hold a Bachelor's degree (S1), followed by 17% with a Master's degree (S2). A smaller percentage completed Doctoral studies 8%, Diploma IV 4%, Diploma III 2%, and Senior High School 2%. This suggests that most customers are knowledgeable and capable of evaluating product claims, brand credibility, and marketing communication.

In terms of digital behavior, Instagram is the most widely used social media platform among respondents 64%, followed by WhatsApp 21% and TikTok 15%. This aligns with Kitchen Flavor's target market, as Instagram serves as the primary channel for product promotions, consumer engagement, and brand storytelling. The dominance of Instagram use indicates its relevance in shaping perceptions of brand image, credibility, and consumer trust, which directly relates to consumers' purchase intention. Overall, the demographic profile supports the relevance of analyzing social media marketing, brand-related perceptions, and trust among digitally active pet owners. These characteristics also reinforce the significance of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, in influencing consumer decision-making for Kitchen Flavor dry dog food.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondent (n=100)

Demographic Measures	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–25 years	15	15%
	26–35 years	69	69%
	36–45 years	10	10%
	46 years and above	6	6%
Gender	Male	57	57%
	Female	43	43%
Education	S1	67	67%
	S2	17	17%
	S3	8	8%
	D4	4	4%
	D3	2	2%
	SMA/SMK	2	2%
Social Media Used	Instagram	64	64%
	WhatsApp	21	21%
	TikTok	15	15%

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 3. Output Results from PLS 3.0 (2025) about Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
X1	0.917	0.957	0.934	0.74
X2	0.867	0.867	0.91	0.716
X3	0.773	0.884	0.865	0.687

X4	0.889	0.929	0.918	0.694
Y	0.858	0.871	0.904	0.702

Constructs show Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating that the measurement items for each variable are reliable. The highest reliability is observed in Social Media Marketing (0.917), while the lowest is Brand Credibility (0.773), which is still acceptable, rho_A values are above 0.70, confirming that the constructs demonstrate strong internal reliability. Social Media Marketing and Brand Trust have particularly high rho_A values (0.957 and 0.929), showing excellent consistency among their indicators. Composite Reliability for all variables exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the constructs provide consistent and reliable measurements. CR values range from 0.865 to 0.934, suggesting that the model has strong reliability across all constructs and All AVE values are above the minimum requirement of 0.50, confirming that each construct achieves adequate convergent validity. This means that the indicators within each construct explain more than half of the variance of the latent variable. The highest AVE belongs to Social Media Marketing (0.740), while the lowest is Brand Credibility (0.687), both still well above the acceptable threshold. Overall, the results indicate that all constructs in this study fulfill the criteria for both reliability and validity. Therefore, the measurement model is considered robust and suitable for further structural analysis on the relationship between Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention for Kitchen Flavor dry dog food.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criterion) from PLS 3.0 (2025)

Construct	Social Media Marketing	Brand Image	Brand Credibility	Brand Trust	Purchase Intention
Social Media Marketing					
Brand Image	0.605				
Brand Credibility	0.39	0.908			
Brand Trust	0.664	1.052	0.717		
Purchase Intention	0.355	0.85	0.764	0.68	

The HTMT analysis presented in the table demonstrates that all constructs meet the discriminant validity requirement, as most HTMT values remain below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90. The relationships between constructs such as Social Media Marketing and Brand Image (0.605), Social Media Marketing and Brand Credibility (0.390), as well as Social Media Marketing and Brand Trust (0.664) indicate adequate discriminant validity, meaning the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. Similarly, Purchase Intention shows acceptable HTMT values when compared with Social Media Marketing (0.355), Brand Credibility (0.764), and Brand Trust (0.680), further confirming construct distinction. However, one value between Brand Image and Brand Trust (1.052) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.90, suggesting a potential overlap or lack of discriminant validity between these two constructs. This may indicate that respondents perceive Brand Image and Brand Trust as highly similar concepts within the context of Kitchen Flavor dog food products. This overlap may occur because, in the context of functional pet food products, consumers tend to perceive brand image and brand trust as closely related constructs, as both are shaped by perceptions of product quality, safety, and reliability. Despite this exception, the overall HTMT results provide sufficient evidence of discriminant validity for the majority of construct pairs.

Table 5. R-Square Value Results from PLS 3.0 (2025)

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Purchase Intention	0.613	0.579

The R-Square value of 0.613 indicates that 61.3% of the variance in Purchase Intention can be explained by the combined influence of Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Brand Credibility, and Brand Trust. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R-Square value of 0.579 shows that after accounting for the number of predictors in the model, 57.9% of the variation in Purchase Intention is still explained by these variables. This demonstrates that the model has strong explanatory power, and the independent variables contribute significantly to predicting consumers' purchase intention toward Kitchen Flavor dry dog food.

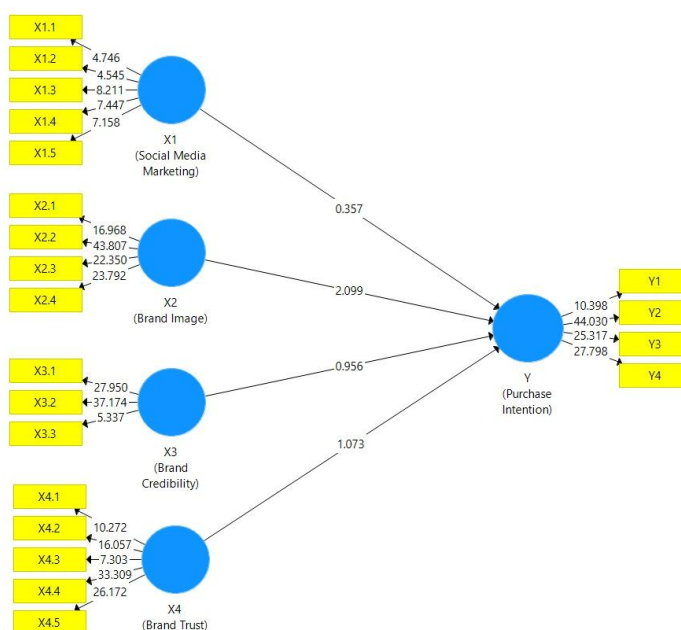


Figure 2. Output Result from PLS 3.0 (2025)

The model shows that Social Media Marketing (X1) has a positive path coefficient of 0.357, indicating that higher engagement with Kitchen Flavor's social media content contributes to an increase in purchase intention. Although the effect is moderate, it suggests that digital promotional activities play a meaningful role in shaping consumer decisions.

Brand Image (X2) demonstrates the strongest influence on Purchase Intention, with a T-value of 2.099. This highlights that consumers' perceptions regarding the overall image, quality, and nutritional benefits of Kitchen Flavor have a significant impact on their willingness to buy the product. A strong and favorable brand image is therefore a critical factor driving consumer decision-making. The path coefficient for Brand Credibility (X3) is 0.956, implying that the degree to which consumers believe in the brand's claims and reliability also contributes positively to purchase intention. When consumers feel confident in the brand's honesty and product performance, they are more inclined to consider purchasing the dry dog food.

Brand Trust (X4) also shows a sizable effect on Purchase Intention, with a coefficient of 1.073. This value reflects that trust built through perceived care, transparency, and consistency significantly enhances consumers' likelihood to purchase Kitchen Flavor products. Trust serves as

a key psychological factor that reduces perceived risk and fosters loyalty. The loading values associated with each indicator (displayed next to the yellow rectangles) confirm that the measurement model meets the reliability requirements, as the indicators load strongly onto their respective constructs.

Table 6. T-Statistic Test Results from PLS 3.0 (2025)

Variable	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ($ O/STDEV $)	P Value	Information
H1	0.178	0.357	0.721	No Significant
H2	0.532	2.099	0.036	Significant
H3	0.167	0.956	0.34	No Significant
H4	0.517	1.073	0.284	No Significant

The hypothesis testing results indicate varying levels of influence among the predictors of purchase intention for Kitchen Flavor dry dog food. H1, which examines the impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention, yields a p-value of 0.721, exceeding the significance threshold of 0.05. The results indicate that Social Media Marketing has a positive but not statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that while social media activities may enhance brand exposure and awareness, they do not directly translate into consumers' purchase decisions. In contrast, H2 receives strong statistical support, with a p-value of 0.036 and a T-value of 2.099, demonstrating that Brand Image exerts a significant and positive effect on Purchase Intention. This finding emphasizes that consumers' perceptions of product quality, reliability, and brand reputation strongly influence their willingness to purchase Kitchen Flavor dog food. For H3, the relationship between Brand Credibility and Purchase Intention is not statistically significant ($p = 0.340$). Brand Credibility shows a positive but not statistically significant relationship with Purchase Intention, indicating that credibility alone is insufficient to drive purchase decisions without strong supporting factors such as perceived value or product experience. Similarly, H4 shows no significant effect, as Brand Trust records a p-value of 0.284. This result suggests that while consumers may generally trust the brand, such trust does not strongly translate into purchase intention for this specific product category.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of social media marketing, brand image, brand credibility, and brand trust on consumers' purchase intention toward Kitchen Flavor dry dog food in Indonesia. The results reveal that among the four variables tested, only brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. This finding highlights that consumers' perceptions of product quality, nutritional value, and overall brand reputation play a crucial role in shaping their willingness to purchase Kitchen Flavor products. In contrast, social media marketing, brand credibility, and brand trust do not significantly influence purchase intention, indicating that these factors alone are not strong determinants of consumer buying decisions within this context.

Furthermore, the model demonstrates that 61.3% of the variance in purchase intention can be explained by the four independent variables, showing substantial predictive power. These findings emphasize the need for Kitchen Flavor to prioritize strategies that strengthen brand image through consistent quality, clear communication of product benefits, and strong value positioning. While social media engagement and trust-building remain important, they must be integrated with efforts that enhance perceived brand value in the minds of consumers. Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of consumer behavior in the pet food industry and provides insights for

improving marketing strategies to boost purchase intention.

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