

The Effect of Digital Marketing and Product Innovation on Purchasing Decisions for Local Cuisine Based on Local Wisdom in Sumbawa Regency Through Brand Image

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of digital marketing and product innovation on consumers' purchasing decisions for local culinary products based on the local wisdom of Sumbawa Regency, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. A quantitative research approach was applied to 144 consumers who had previously purchased local culinary products. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling according to predetermined criteria, including being at least 17 years old and having obtained product information through digital media. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling. The results indicate that digital marketing does not significantly influence brand image but has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Product innovation has a positive and significant effect on both brand image and purchasing decisions. Furthermore, brand image does not mediate the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions or between product innovation and purchasing decisions. These findings demonstrate that product innovation plays a more significant role than brand image in increasing product attractiveness and encouraging consumer purchasing decisions. Accordingly, local culinary MSMEs should continuously develop innovative products while optimizing their digital marketing strategies to strengthen competitive advantage and improve market performance.

Keyword: Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, Brand Image, Purchase Decisions.

JEL Codes: M31, O33, L66

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the backbone of Indonesia's economy. According to Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia (2025), MSMEs contribute more than 60% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), absorb nearly 97% of the national workforce, and account for more than 64 million business units. These figures highlight the strategic role of MSMEs in promoting economic resilience, employment generation, and inclusive economic development. Furthermore, MSMEs account for approximately 99% of all business establishments in Indonesia, demonstrating their dominant position within the national economic structure. Beyond their economic contribution, MSMEs support the development of local products, create new market opportunities, enhance export potential, and contribute to the country's balance of payments. Despite their significant role, Indonesian MSMEs continue to face various structural and adaptive challenges,

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particularly in responding to increasingly competitive and digitalized market environments ([Tambunan, 2022](#)).

According to the [Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs](#) through the Legal Documentation and Information Network (JDIH), Indonesia had more than 30.18 million formally registered MSMEs by the end of 2024. Including informal businesses, the total number of MSMEs reaches approximately 66 million, of which more than 99% are classified as micro-enterprises. At the regional level, Sumbawa Regency recorded more than 5,500 active MSMEs in 2024, primarily operating in the culinary, handicraft, and agricultural sectors. This substantial number reflects the important contribution of MSMEs to regional economic development while also emphasizing the need to strengthen their competitiveness through effective marketing strategies and continuous product innovation.

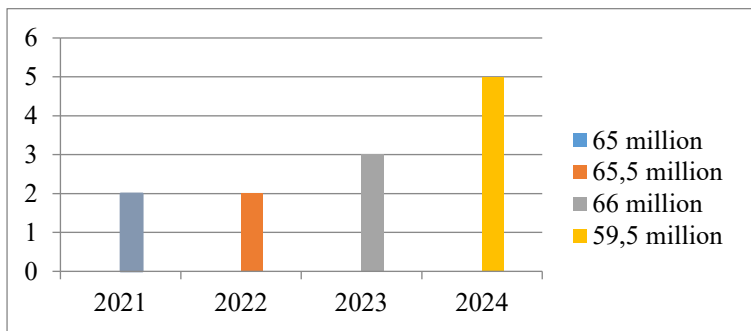


Figure 1. Chart Showing the Growth of MSMEs

Source: KADIN Indonesia & Ministry of MSMEs (2024)

According to ([Dataset - Satu Data NTB, 2026](#)), Sumbawa Regency recorded more than 5,508 active MSMEs during the 2023–2024 period, with the majority operating in the culinary, handicraft, and agricultural sectors. This reflects the significant contribution of MSMEs to the regional economy while also highlighting the need to enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic business environment.

At the same time, the rapid expansion of internet access in Indonesia has transformed the way businesses operate and interact with consumers. Over the past two decades, internet penetration has grown substantially, creating new opportunities for MSMEs to adopt digital technologies in their business activities. According to [Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia \(2025\)](#), the number of internet users in Indonesia has continued to increase annually, providing a broader digital marketplace and enabling MSMEs to expand their market reach through digital marketing and online business platforms.

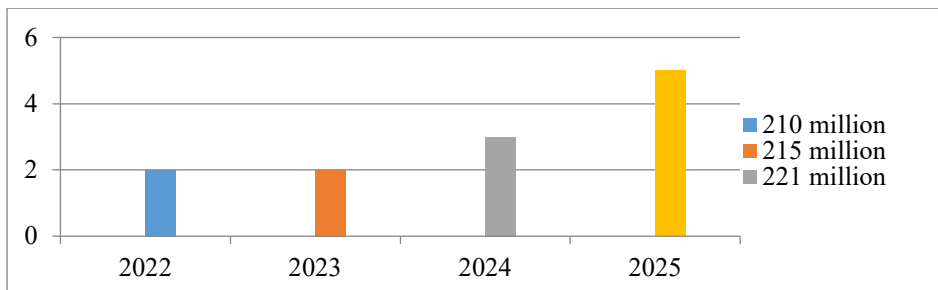


Figure 2. Number of Internet Users in Indonesia

Source: [Maddalena, S., & Maddalena, 2025](#)

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Based on the chart above, more than 75% of Indonesia's population has access to the internet. Moreover, reports from [Maddalena, S., & Maddalena \(2025\)](#) indicate that Indonesians rank among the world's most active social media users. This rapid growth in internet penetration has significantly transformed the business environment, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The internet has become a key driver of MSME development in Indonesia by shifting business practices from conventional methods to more efficient, technology-based approaches. Through digital platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia, MSMEs can expand their market reach beyond local boundaries to national and international markets. Furthermore, the internet facilitates cost-effective promotion, simplifies business transactions, and enhances organizational capabilities, enabling MSMEs to improve their competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth in the digital economy (Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs of the Republic of Indonesia).

In today's highly digitalized business environment, MSMEs can no longer rely solely on conventional marketing strategies. Advances in digital technology have fundamentally changed consumer behavior, particularly in how consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing decisions. Consequently, digital marketing has become an essential strategic tool for business sustainability. Social media marketing, as one of the core components of digital marketing, has been shown to influence consumer perceptions positively and purchasing decisions ([Dewi et al., 2024](#)). Therefore, the ability of MSMEs to effectively utilize digital media has become a competitive necessity rather than merely a business option.

Besides digital marketing, product innovation is another critical factor in strengthening MSME competitiveness. Innovative products create added value, improve consumers' perceptions of quality and uniqueness, and enable businesses to differentiate themselves from competitors ([Tarmidi, et al. 2023](#)). Previous empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that product innovation positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions, making it one of the primary determinants of market success ([Wardani, et al. 2026](#)).

Despite these opportunities, many MSMEs, particularly those producing traditional goods, continue to struggle to establish a strong market position. One of the primary challenges is the relatively weak brand image associated with local products, which are often perceived as less modern and less competitive than contemporary commercial brands. Accordingly, strengthening brand image through digital marketing and continuous product innovation is essential. A favorable brand image can enhance consumer trust and reinforce the effects of marketing activities and product innovation on purchasing decisions. Previous research has shown that brand image significantly mediates the relationships between digital marketing, product innovation, and purchasing decisions ([Farouk & Sukaatmadja, 2026](#)).

Among the region's leading MSME sectors, traditional culinary products represent an important component of Sumbawa's cultural heritage. Local specialties include dishes such as *sepat*, *singang*, and *gecok*, as well as traditional snacks such as *manjareal*, *bingka*, and *dange*. Despite their uniqueness and cultural value, these products remain relatively unknown outside the region, even though some have entered e-commerce marketplaces. This indicates that the economic and cultural potential of Sumbawa's traditional culinary products has not yet been fully optimized, particularly in terms of strengthening competitiveness and expanding market reach.

Based on these conditions, it is important to examine the factors that influence consumers'

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purchasing decisions regarding local culinary products. Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of digital marketing and product innovation on purchasing decisions for local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on MSME marketing strategies and provide practical recommendations for strengthening the competitiveness of local culinary businesses in the digital era.

Literature Review

Grand Theory

This study employs the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) approach proposed by [Mehrabian & Russell \(1974\)](#) to explain the relationships among variables. Within this framework, digital marketing and product innovation serve as external stimuli that influence consumers through information and promotions. These stimuli are processed cognitively and affectively as the "organism," represented by brand image that is, consumers' perceptions and evaluations of the product. Subsequently, this process generates a response in the form of a purchase decision.

Additionally, this study also draws upon the Diffusion of Innovation Theory introduced by [Rogers, \(2003\)](#) to reinforce the role of product innovation in influencing consumer behavior. Innovations such as menu variety development, the use of more modern packaging, and improvements in taste quality can enhance product appeal while strengthening the brand image in consumers' minds. Thus, the higher the level of innovation perceived by consumers, the greater the likelihood that the product will be accepted and chosen, which ultimately drives the purchase decision.

Product Innovation

Product innovation is the process of creating something new or adding value to enhance a product's competitive edge in line with consumer expectations ([Tarmidi and Mulyani, 2023](#)). According to Rogers (2003), these are relative advantages, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing employs indicators adapted from [Ducoffe \(1996\)](#), [Taylor & Strutton \(2011\)](#), [Logan et al. \(2012\)](#), and the concept of interactive marketing described by [Ellis-Chadwick, \(2019\)](#). These are Accessibility, Interactivity, Entertainment, Trust, and Informativeness.

Brand Image

Brand Image is the perception that a manufacturer or company conveys regarding a brand or product, aimed at fostering a positive perception in consumers' minds toward a specific brand. In this study, brand image indicators are based on [Aaker & Biel \(2009\)](#), namely Corporate Image, Product Image, and User Image

Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is the process of resolving a problem faced by an individual in selecting the most appropriate behavior from two or more behavioral alternatives. It is considered the most appropriate action in purchasing, going through the stages of the decision-making process ([Tjiptono 2011, n.d.](#)). The dimensions for measuring purchase decisions in this study are based on the decision-making stages outlined by ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2008](#)), namely: recognition

of needs, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

Research Method

The study used a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique. This method was selected because the exact population size of consumers of local culinary products based on Sumbawa Regency's local wisdom was unknown. Respondents were therefore selected based on criteria aligned with the research objectives. The eligibility criteria required respondents to have purchased local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency, be at least 17 years old, and have obtained information about these products through digital media.

Data were collected by distributing questionnaires directly to potential respondents at locations where local culinary products based on local wisdom were sold or promoted in Sumbawa Regency. Before completing the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and verified that each respondent met the specified criteria. The respondents then completed the questionnaire independently. A total of 144 questionnaires were collected from respondents who fulfilled the research criteria. All questionnaires were complete and suitable for analysis; consequently, the final sample consisted of 144 respondents.

The sample size was determined based on the guideline that the minimum sample size for PLS-SEM should be five to ten times the number of indicators of the most complex latent construct ([Hao & Chon, 2021, p. 122](#)). As this study included 18 indicators, the recommended sample size ranged from 90 to 180 respondents. With 144 respondents, the sample met this guideline and was considered adequate for conducting PLS-SEM analysis and testing the proposed research model.

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships among the variables specified in the research model. This approach involved measuring the variables using numerical data and applying statistical analyses to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the relationships among the latent constructs. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling was used for data analysis because it is appropriate for examining complex research models involving multiple latent variables and for assessing both direct and indirect relationships.

Questionnaire Distribution

The questionnaire in this study was distributed directly to respondents through face-to-face administration. This method was chosen to ensure that the respondents met the predetermined selection criteria and to increase the accuracy and completeness of the collected data. The respondents were consumers who had purchased local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency, were at least 17 years old, and had experience accessing product information through digital media. Before completing the questionnaire, each respondent was informed about the purpose of the study, and the researcher confirmed that the respondent met all inclusion criteria. A total of 144 valid questionnaires were successfully collected and used for further analysis.

Respondents by Gender

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The characteristics of respondents by gender were used to determine the composition of the respondents who participated in this study. Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to 144 respondents, gender data were obtained as presented in the following figure.

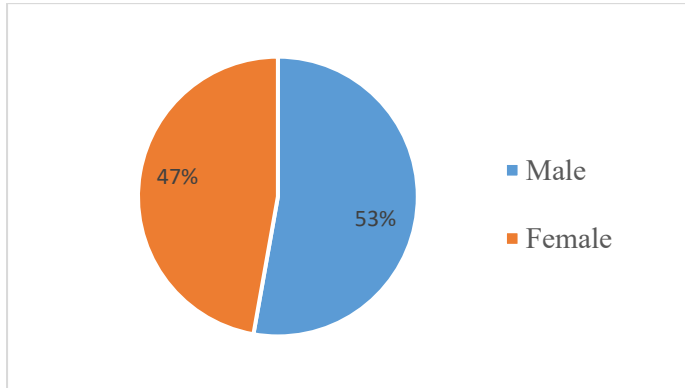


Figure 3. Respondents by Gender

Source: Processed primary data, (2026)

Based on Figure 3, the sample consisted of 76 female respondents (52.8%) and 68 male respondents (47.2%). This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, with female respondents slightly outnumbering their male counterparts. The small difference in proportions suggests that both male and female consumers are adequately represented in the study, providing a balanced perspective on purchasing decisions for local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency. The higher proportion of female respondents may indicate greater participation among women in the survey; however, the difference is not substantial enough to suggest a meaningful gender disparity in the respondent profile.

Respondents by Educational Level

Respondents' highest level of education was used to determine the educational level of respondents in this study. Educational level can influence a person's ability to receive, understand, and evaluate information obtained through digital media, including information about local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency. The distribution of respondents by highest level of education is presented in the figure.

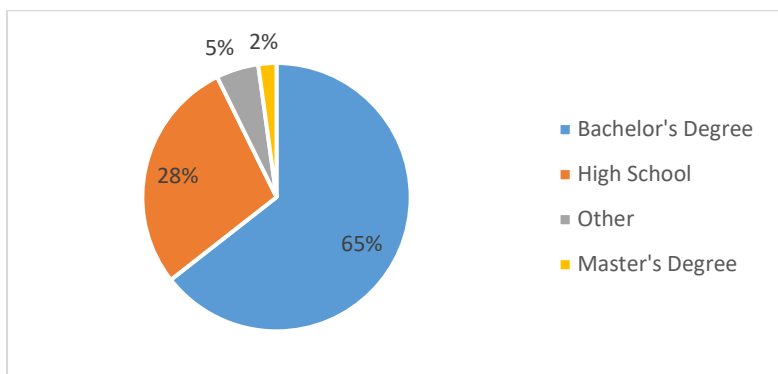


Figure 4. Respondents by Educational Level

Source: Processed primary data, (2026)

Based on Figure 4, the majority of respondents held a Bachelor's degree, accounting for 89 individuals (61.8%). This was followed by respondents with a senior high school education (SMA/SMK), totaling 39 individuals (27.1%). Respondents in the "Other" education category accounted for 7 individuals (4.9%), while 6 respondents (4.2%) held a diploma. The smallest proportion of respondents held a Master's degree, with only 3 individuals (2.1%).

These findings indicate that individuals with relatively high educational attainment dominated the respondent profile. This educational background may contribute to respondents' ability to access and evaluate information through digital media, understand marketing communications, and assess product attributes and brand image before making purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, this observation is descriptive in nature and does not imply a causal relationship between educational level and purchasing behavior.

Respondents by Occupation

The characteristics of respondents by occupation were used to determine the occupational backgrounds of the respondents who participated in this study. Occupation is one of the factors that can influence consumer behavior, particularly in terms of economic capacity, access to digital information, and consumption patterns regarding local culinary products based on local wisdom. The distribution of respondents by occupation is presented in the figure.

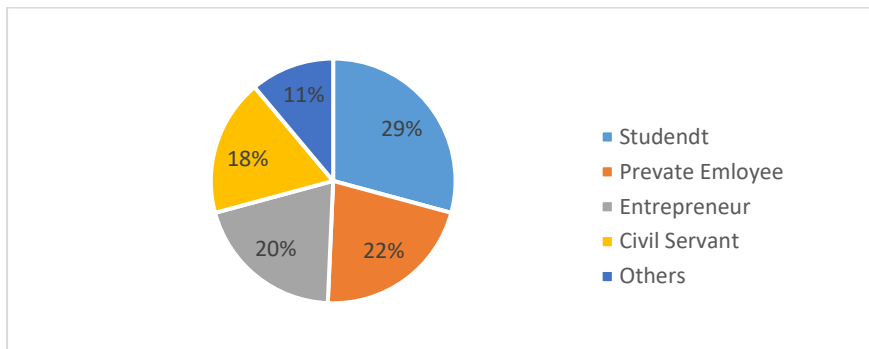


Figure 5. Respondents by Occupation

Source: Processed primary data, (2026)

Based on Figure 5, the largest proportion of respondents were students, comprising 42 individuals (29.2%). This was followed by private-sector employees with 31 respondents (21.5%), self-employed individuals with 29 respondents (20.1%), and civil servants with 26 respondents (18.1%). The remaining 16 respondents (11.1%) were classified under the "Other" occupational category.

These findings indicate that the respondents represented a diverse range of occupational backgrounds, with students constituting the largest group. The distribution suggests that the study captured responses from individuals with varying employment statuses, providing a broad representation of consumers of local culinary products in Sumbawa Regency. The relatively high proportion of students may also reflect the greater participation of younger, digitally connected consumers, who are more likely to access product information through digital media, consistent with the sampling criteria adopted in this study.

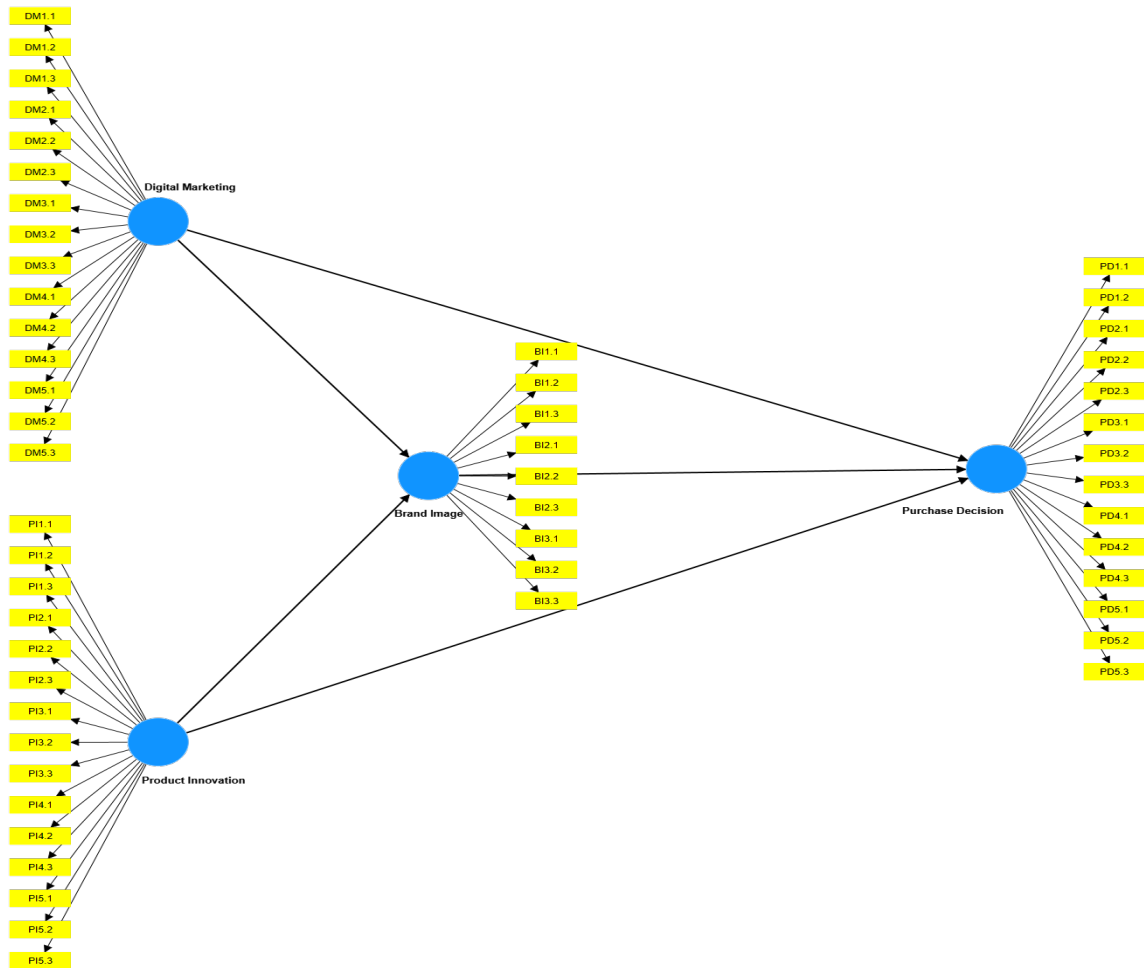
4. Findings and Discussions

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The analysis consisted of two stages: evaluation of the

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measurement model (outer model) to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, followed by evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the proposed hypotheses. The estimated research model generated using SmartPLS is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Research Model



Source: Processed primary data, (2026)

4.1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) serves to test the validity and reliability of the model. In this study, the outer model was evaluated through convergent validity and discriminant validity of the construct-forming indicators, as well as composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha for the indicator blocks. Convergent validity is based on the principle that the measures (manifest variables) of a construct should be highly correlated.

4.1.1. Convergent Validity

To facilitate the interpretation of the measurement model, the questionnaire items corresponding to each indicator code used in this study are presented in Table 1. These items serve as references for the indicator codes employed in the subsequent validity analysis.

Table 1. Items Utilized to Measure the Constructs

Indicator	Constructs	Items	Reference	
Brand Image				
Corporate Image	BI1.1	Local culinary businesses in Sumbawa prioritize product quality.	Aaker & Biel, (2009)	
	BI1.2	These businesses provide excellent service to customers.		
	BI1.3	Local culinary businesses in Sumbawa have a good reputation.		
Product Image	BI2.1	Sumbawa’s local culinary products have an appealing appearance.		
	BI2.2	Sumbawa’s local culinary products reflect the region’s cultural values.		
	BI2.3	Sumbawa’s local culinary products are of consistent quality.		
Consumer Perception	BI3.1	I feel proud to enjoy Sumbawa’s local cuisine.		
	BI3.2	Consumers of Sumbawa’s local cuisine are seen as caring about local culture.		
	BI3.3	Enjoying Sumbawa’s local products reflects a positive sense of self-identity.		
Digital Marketing				
Accessibility	DM1.1	I can easily find information about Sumbawa’s local cuisine through digital media.		(Ellis-Chadwick, 2019)
	DM1.2	Information about Sumbawa’s local cuisine is available on various digital platforms.		
	DM1.3	I can access information about Sumbawa’s local cuisine at any time via the internet.		
Interactivity	DM2.1	I can communicate with sellers through digital platforms (chat, comments, or DMs).		
	DM2.2	Local Sumbawa food businesses respond quickly to customer questions.		
	DM2.3	I have interacted (discussions/comments) regarding local Sumbawa food products on digital platforms.		
Entertainment	DM3.1	The promotional content featuring Sumbawa’s local cuisine is interesting to view.		
	DM3.2	The presentation of Sumbawa’s local culinary content feels creative and entertaining.		
	DM3.3	The digital content makes me interested in learning more about Sumbawa’s local culinary products.		
Trust	DM4.1	I trust the information about Sumbawa’s local cuisine presented through digital media.		
	DM4.2	Online testimonials increase my trust in Sumbawa’s local culinary products.		
	DM4.3	Digital content accurately reflects the actual condition of Sumbawa’s local culinary		

		products.	
Informative	DM5.1	The information presented in digital media helps me understand Sumbawa's local culinary products.	
	DM5.2	Digital content provides comprehensive information (price, location, taste, etc.).	
	DM5.3	Digital information makes it easier for me to make purchasing decisions.	
Product Innovation			
Relative Advantages	PI1.1	Sumbawa's local culinary products are unique compared to other products.	
	PI1.2	Innovations in Sumbawa's local culinary products provide high added value.	
	PI1.3	Sumbawa's local culinary products are of good quality compared to other alternatives.	
Suitability	PI2.1	Sumbawa's local culinary products suit my taste.	
	PI2.2	Sumbawa's local culinary products align with my consumption habits.	
	PI2.3	Product innovations preserve cultural values and local wisdom.	
Complexity	PI3.1	Sumbawa's local culinary products are easily recognizable by their taste, shape, and presentation.	
	PI3.2	Information about Sumbawa's local culinary products is easy for consumers to understand.	(Rogers, 2003)
	PI3.3	I can easily understand the characteristics of Sumbawa's local culinary products.	
Opportunity to Try	PI4.1	I had the opportunity to try Sumbawa's local culinary products before buying them.	
	PI4.2	The availability of samples or small portions made me interested in trying them.	
	PI4.3	Sumbawa's local culinary products are easy to find and try.	
Ease of Observation	PI5.1	The uniqueness of Sumbawa's local culinary products is evident from their appearance or presentation.	
	PI5.2	I can assess the quality of Sumbawa's local products based on their visual appearance.	
	PI5.3	The distinctive characteristics of the products are easily recognizable by consumers.	
Purchase Decision			
Identifying Needs	PD1.1	I recognize the need to consume local Sumbawa cuisine.	(Kotler & Armstrong, 2008)
	PD1.2	Local Sumbawa cuisine can satisfy my dietary needs.	

Searching for Information	PD2.1	I look for information before purchasing local Sumbawa cuisine.
	PD2.2	I pay attention to reviews and testimonials from other consumers.
	PD2.3	I use social media to find information about local Sumbawa cuisine.
Evaluation of Alternatives	PD3.1	I compare several local Sumbawa food products before purchasing.
	PD3.2	I compare prices among local Sumbawa food products.
	PD3.3	I consider the taste before purchasing local Sumbawa food products.
Purchase Decision	PD4.1	I decide to purchase based on personal considerations.
	PD4.2	I am confident in my decision to purchase Sumbawa's local culinary products.
	PD4.3	I am willing to repurchase Sumbawa's local culinary products.
Post-Purchase Behavior	PD5.1	I feel satisfied after consuming Sumbawa's local culinary products.
	PD5.2	Sumbawa's local culinary products meet my expectations.
	PD5.3	I am willing to recommend Sumbawa's local culinary products to others.

Source: Data processed in 2026

Convergent validity is used to measure the degree of correlation between an indicator and the construct it represents. This test is conducted by examining the outer loading values. An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value greater than 0.70. Convergent validity is used to measure the degree of correlation between an indicator and the construct it represents. This test is conducted by examining the outer loading values. An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value > 0.70 .

Table 2. Outer Loading

Constructs	Indicators	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Notes
Brand Image	BI1.1	0,832	0,831	0,039	21,217	0,000	Valid
	BI1.2	0,817	0,813	0,042	19,421	0,000	Valid
	BI1.3	0,782	0,777	0,052	14,943	0,000	Valid
	BI2.1	0,837	0,834	0,043	19,528	0,000	Valid
	BI2.2	0,817	0,813	0,052	15,728	0,000	Valid
	BI2.3	0,799	0,795	0,062	12,931	0,000	Valid
	BI3.1	0,860	0,858	0,032	26,557	0,000	Valid
	BI3.2	0,854	0,852	0,039	21,693	0,000	Valid
	BI3.3	0,884	0,884	0,021	41,511	0,000	Valid

Digital Marketing	DM1.1	0,708	0,705	0,075	9,427	0,000	Valid
	DM1.2	0,740	0,739	0,053	13,986	0,000	Valid
	DM1.3	0,740	0,738	0,066	11,273	0,000	Valid
	DM2.1	0,794	0,790	0,044	17,899	0,000	Valid
	DM2.2	0,815	0,812	0,039	20,890	0,000	Valid
	DM2.3	0,764	0,762	0,057	13,489	0,000	Valid
	DM3.1	0,799	0,795	0,044	18,357	0,000	Valid
	DM3.2	0,820	0,816	0,039	20,752	0,000	Valid
	DM3.3	0,853	0,849	0,037	22,950	0,000	Valid
	DM4.1	0,808	0,803	0,054	15,027	0,000	Valid
	DM4.2	0,821	0,816	0,040	20,694	0,000	Valid
	DM4.3	0,810	0,808	0,043	19,012	0,000	Valid
	DM5.1	0,838	0,835	0,036	23,557	0,000	Valid
	DM5.2	0,821	0,816	0,054	15,338	0,000	Valid
	DM5.3	0,860	0,858	0,030	28,790	0,000	Valid
Product Innovation	PI1.1	0,759	0,758	0,055	13,819	0,000	Valid
	PI1.2	0,800	0,795	0,052	15,259	0,000	Valid
	PI1.3	0,863	0,860	0,030	28,687	0,000	Valid
	PI2.1	0,738	0,733	0,063	11,719	0,000	Valid
	PI2.2	0,792	0,788	0,052	15,342	0,000	Valid
	PI2.3	0,859	0,857	0,030	28,635	0,000	Valid
	PI3.1	0,845	0,841	0,038	22,112	0,000	Valid
	PI3.2	0,843	0,841	0,030	27,750	0,000	Valid
	PI3.3	0,705	0,700	0,069	10,170	0,000	Valid
	PI4.1	0,822	0,820	0,039	20,924	0,000	Valid
	PI4.2	0,754	0,752	0,063	11,923	0,000	Valid
	PI4.3	0,817	0,813	0,044	18,709	0,000	Valid
	PI5.1	0,826	0,823	0,038	21,793	0,000	Valid
	PI5.2	0,818	0,815	0,035	23,190	0,000	Valid
	PI5.3	0,811	0,806	0,047	17,384	0,000	Valid
Purchase Decision	PD1.1	0,740	0,743	0,051	14,433	0,000	Valid
	PD1.2	0,722	0,725	0,047	15,493	0,000	Valid
	PD2.1	0,702	0,701	0,063	11,081	0,000	Valid
	PD2.2	0,772	0,771	0,044	17,572	0,000	Valid
	PD2.3	0,771	0,767	0,049	15,852	0,000	Valid
	PD3.1	0,733	0,729	0,058	12,543	0,000	Valid
	PD3.2	0,793	0,789	0,051	15,595	0,000	Valid
	PD3.3	0,746	0,741	0,063	11,934	0,000	Valid
	PD4.1	0,762	0,761	0,052	14,673	0,000	Valid
	PD4.2	0,763	0,758	0,063	12,083	0,000	Valid
	PD4.3	0,826	0,823	0,038	21,599	0,000	Valid
	PD5.1	0,791	0,789	0,044	17,941	0,000	Valid
	PD5.2	0,713	0,706	0,076	9,376	0,000	Valid

PD5.3	0,791	0,787	0,046	17,251	0,000	Valid
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Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 2, all measurement indicators exhibit outer loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This indicates that each indicator adequately reflects its respective latent construct, thereby satisfying the criterion for convergent validity. Accordingly, all indicators were retained for subsequent analysis.

Convergent validity was further assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which measures the proportion of variance in the indicators explained by their corresponding latent construct. According to [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#), an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity, meaning that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. The AVE values for each construct are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Constructs	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Image	0,692
Digital Marketing	0,641
Product Innovation	0,647
Purchase Decision	0,577

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 3, all constructs achieved Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity. Specifically, the AVE values were 0.692 for Brand Image, 0.641 for Digital Marketing, 0.647 for Product Innovation, and 0.577 for Purchase Decision. These results demonstrate that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its corresponding indicators, thereby satisfying the convergent validity criterion recommended for PLS-SEM analysis ([Hair et al., 2017](#)).

Among the four constructs, Brand Image exhibited the highest AVE value (0.692), indicating that its indicators provide the strongest representation of the underlying construct. Overall, the findings confirm that all constructs possess satisfactory convergent validity, suggesting that the measurement model (outer model) is valid and appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

4.1.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is used to ensure that a construct is clearly distinguishable from other constructs. This can be assessed by examining cross-loadings or using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. A construct is said to meet the criterion of discriminant validity if the indicators within that construct have higher loadings than those of other constructs.

Table 4. Cross Loading

	Brand Image	Digital Marketing	Product Innovation	Purchase Decision
BI1.1	0,832	0,773	0,798	0,663
BI1.2	0,817	0,709	0,785	0,640
BI1.3	0,782	0,701	0,706	0,607
BI2.1	0,837	0,704	0,731	0,644

BI2.2	0,817	0,715	0,768	0,625
BI2.3	0,799	0,674	0,709	0,590
BI3.1	0,860	0,737	0,757	0,685
BI3.2	0,854	0,697	0,733	0,648
BI3.3	0,884	0,770	0,791	0,692
DM1.1	0,555	0,708	0,587	0,546
DM1.2	0,590	0,740	0,627	0,553
DM1.3	0,597	0,740	0,613	0,548
DM2.1	0,655	0,794	0,724	0,616
DM2.2	0,718	0,815	0,714	0,650
DM2.3	0,682	0,764	0,706	0,603
DM3.1	0,727	0,799	0,747	0,586
DM3.2	0,761	0,820	0,777	0,673
DM3.3	0,757	0,853	0,799	0,662
DM4.1	0,717	0,808	0,792	0,629
DM4.2	0,700	0,821	0,778	0,661
DM4.3	0,734	0,810	0,782	0,685
DM5.1	0,716	0,838	0,775	0,701
DM5.2	0,705	0,821	0,770	0,640
DM5.3	0,748	0,860	0,796	0,720
PI1.1	0,719	0,741	0,759	0,644
PI1.2	0,742	0,753	0,800	0,624
PI1.3	0,780	0,800	0,863	0,677
PI2.1	0,702	0,656	0,738	0,579
PI2.2	0,767	0,709	0,792	0,626
PI2.3	0,754	0,775	0,859	0,688
PI3.1	0,752	0,749	0,845	0,664
PI3.2	0,766	0,795	0,843	0,714
PI3.3	0,650	0,643	0,705	0,560
PI4.1	0,704	0,762	0,822	0,598
PI4.2	0,644	0,715	0,754	0,621
PI4.3	0,720	0,776	0,817	0,630
PI5.1	0,742	0,765	0,826	0,692
PI5.2	0,761	0,742	0,818	0,637
PI5.3	0,715	0,693	0,811	0,567
PD1.1	0,730	0,739	0,694	0,740
PD1.2	0,717	0,646	0,682	0,722
PD2.1	0,540	0,620	0,543	0,702
PD2.2	0,609	0,656	0,648	0,772
PD2.3	0,504	0,628	0,564	0,771
PD3.1	0,467	0,531	0,533	0,733
PD3.2	0,521	0,533	0,529	0,793
PD3.3	0,502	0,519	0,532	0,746
PD4.1	0,482	0,571	0,557	0,762
PD4.2	0,582	0,550	0,610	0,763
PD4.3	0,658	0,646	0,664	0,826
PD5.1	0,613	0,589	0,608	0,791

PD5.2	0,598	0,475	0,571	0,713
PD5.3	0,611	0,631	0,599	0,791

Source: Smart PLS 4

A Based on Table 4, the cross-loading results indicate that each measurement indicator has a higher loading on its respective construct than on any other construct in the model. This demonstrates that all indicators are more strongly associated with their intended latent variables than with other constructs, thereby satisfying the criterion for discriminant validity.

Accordingly, the constructs of Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision exhibit adequate discriminant validity, confirming that the measurement model (outer model) is valid and suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.

4.1.3. Composite Reliability

Composite reliability is used to measure the level of internal consistency of indicators within a construct. A construct is considered reliable if it has a composite reliability value greater than 0.70.

Table 5. Composite reliability

	Composite reliability
Brand Image	0,945
Digital Marketing	0,962
Product Innovation	0,962
Purchase Decision	0,945

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 5, all variables have a composite reliability score above 0.70. This indicates that the indicators within the variables of Brand Image, Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, and Purchase Decision exhibit a very high level of internal consistency. Thus, all constructs in this study are deemed reliable and meet the criteria for composite reliability.

4.1.4. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure the reliability or consistency of a research instrument. A construct is considered to have good reliability if its Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.70.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Image	0,944
Digital Marketing	0,960
Product Innovation	0,961
Purchase Decision	0,944

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 6, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70. This indicates that the indicators for the variables Brand Image, Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, and Purchase Decision exhibit excellent consistency in measuring the constructs under study. Thus, all variables in this study are deemed reliable and meet the Cronbach's Alpha criteria.

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5.2 Model Fit Test

A model fit test was conducted to determine the overall level of fit of the research model. In this study, the model fit was assessed by examining the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) values generated by the SmartPLS application. According to [Hair et al. \(2021\)](#), a model is said to have a good level of fit if the SRMR value is < 0.10 or, more strictly, < 0.08 . Meanwhile, an NFI value that approaches 1 indicates an increasingly better level of model fit.

Table 7. SRMR

	Saturated model
SRMR	0,064
d_ ULS	5,781
d_ G	6,104
Chi-square	3445,676
NFI	0,637

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 7, the SRMR value of 0.064 is below the threshold of 0.08, indicating that the model has a good fit. Thus, the research model is deemed suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

5.3 Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

Structural model evaluation (internal model) is used to test the relationships between latent constructs (hypothesis testing). Structural model evaluation is conducted by examining values such as:

5.3.1 R-Squares (R^2)

R-squared is the coefficient of determination for an endogenous variable, used to assess the ability of exogenous variables to explain the endogenous variable. According to Chin (1998) as cited in Ghazali and Latan (2015:78), R-squared values of 0.67 are considered good, 0.33 moderate, and 0.19 weak. The R-squared values are presented in the table below:

Table 8. R-Square

	R-square
Brand Image	0,829
Purchase Decision	0,664

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on Table 8, it is evident that the R-Square value for Brand Image is 0.829. This indicates that the variables Digital Marketing and Product Innovation account for 82.9% of the variation in Brand Image, while other variables outside the research model explain the remaining 17.1%. Based on [Chin's \(1998\)](#) criteria, an R-Square value of 0.829 falls into the "substantial" category, indicating that the model has a very strong ability to explain the variation in Brand Image. Furthermore, the R-Square value for Purchase Decision of 0.664 indicates that the variables Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, and Brand Image account for 66.4% of the variation in Purchase Decision. In comparison, the remaining 33.6% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. Based on [Chin's \(1998\)](#) criteria, an R-Square value of 0.664 also falls

into the "good" (substantial) category because it is close to 0.67. Thus, it can be concluded that the research model has a strong ability to explain the variables of Brand Image and Purchase Decision; therefore, the model used in this study is considered good for explaining the relationships among the variables under investigation.

5.3.2 Q^2 Predictive Relevance

Predictive Relevance (Q^2) is used to measure how well the model performs. This test assesses the model's predictive ability through a blindfolding procedure. A Q^2 value greater than 0 indicates that the model has predictive ability, while a Q^2 value less than 0 indicates that the model does not have good predictive ability. The Q^2 value in this study was obtained through the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - 0,829)(1 - 0,664) \\ Q^2 &= 1 - (0,171 \times 0,336) \\ Q^2 &= 1 - 0,057 \\ Q^2 &= 0,943 \end{aligned}$$

Based on these calculations, a Q^2 value of 0.943 was obtained. Since this value is greater than 0, it can be concluded that the research model has predictive relevance ([Fauzi, 2022, p. 117](#)). This means that the variables—Digital Marketing, Product Innovation, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision—used in the model can explain and predict the phenomenon under study with a high degree of accuracy. Thus, this research model has strong predictive relevance and is suitable for explaining the relationships among the variables in this study.

5.3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS to determine the relationships among the variables in the research model. The hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is > 1.645 and the p-value is < 0.05 at a 5% significance level (one-tailed) ([Hair et al., 2021, p. 108](#)). Conversely, if the t-statistic value is < 1.66 and the p-value is > 0.05 , the hypothesis is rejected. The results of the hypothesis testing based on path coefficients are presented in the following table.

Table 9. Path Coefficient

	Original sample	T statistics	P values
Digital Marketing -> Brand Image	0,217	1,836	0,066
Product Innovation -> Brand Image	0,707	6,293	0,000
Digital Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0,363	2,704	0,007
Product Innovation -> Purchase Decision	0,225	1,585	0,113
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0,257	1,965	0,049
Digital Marketing - Brand Image > Purchase Decision	0,056	1,168	0,243
Product Innovation - Brand Image > Purchase Decision	0,181	1,922	0,055

Source: Smart PLS 4

Based on the bootstrapping results obtained from the PLS-SEM analysis in SmartPLS, the

hypothesized relationships were evaluated using the significance criteria of a *t*-statistic greater than 1.96 and a *p*-value below 0.05. The results, presented in Table 9, indicate that not all proposed hypotheses were supported.

Brand Image was found to have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.257$, $t = 1.965$, $p = 0.049$), indicating that a stronger brand image increases consumers' purchasing decisions regarding local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency. In contrast, Digital Marketing did not significantly influence Brand Image ($\beta = 0.217$, $t = 1.836$, $p = 0.066$), suggesting that digital marketing activities alone were insufficient to strengthen consumers' perceptions of the brand. Nevertheless, Digital Marketing exerted a positive and significant direct effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.363$, $t = 2.704$, $p = 0.007$), demonstrating that digital marketing can directly encourage purchasing decisions.

Product Innovation showed a positive and significant effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.707$, $t = 6.293$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that greater product innovation enhances consumers' perceptions of the brand. However, its direct effect on Purchase Decision was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.225$, $t = 1.585$, $p = 0.113$), suggesting that product innovation alone is insufficient to directly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

The mediation analysis further revealed that Brand Image did not significantly mediate the relationship between Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.056$, $t = 1.168$, $p = 0.243$). Likewise, the indirect effect of Product Innovation on Purchase Decision through Brand Image was not significant ($\beta = 0.181$, $t = 1.922$, $p = 0.055$). Therefore, the mediating role of Brand Image was not supported in either relationship.

Overall, the findings suggest that Digital Marketing primarily influences Purchase Decision through a direct effect, whereas Product Innovation mainly strengthens Brand Image. However, Brand Image does not function as a significant mediating mechanism linking Digital Marketing or Product Innovation to consumers' Purchase Decisions in the context of local culinary MSMEs in Sumbawa Regency.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate that Digital Marketing does not have a significant effect on Brand Image; consequently, the first hypothesis is rejected. This result suggests that the digital marketing activities implemented by local culinary businesses in Sumbawa Regency have not been sufficiently effective in developing a strong brand image in consumers' minds. This finding is consistent with a previous study, which reported that digital marketing does not significantly influence brand image (Febrianti & Darda, 2026). This may be because consumers do not assess brand image solely on the intensity of digital promotions. Instead, they also consider their direct product experiences, service quality, consistency of brand identity, and recommendations from others.

Among local culinary businesses, digital media is often used primarily to share product information and drive short-term sales rather than build a strong brand image. The effectiveness of digital marketing depends largely on a company's ability to foster emotional connections and provide consumers with consistent brand experiences. Without meaningful and high-quality interactions, digital marketing efforts may have limited effects on consumers' perceptions of the brand. Furthermore, the lack of significant mediation suggests that these promotional efforts may operate independently of brand perception when driving immediate consumer interest

with research demonstrating that brand image typically serves as a crucial bridge for transforming quality and promotion into long-term purchasing behavior ([Prasetya et al., 2026](#); [Selviasari et al., 2023](#)).

The findings further reveal that digital marketing practices among most local culinary MSMEs in Sumbawa remain focused on disseminating product information and promoting sales rather than on brand-building activities. Most business owners still employ generic product names such as *Singang*, *Sepat*, *Gecok*, or *Mie Sumbawa* without supporting them with distinctive brand identities, including unique business names, logos, slogans, or consistent visual branding elements. As a result, their digital marketing efforts have failed to create strong brand differentiation and memorable brand associations in consumers' minds.

In the digital era, brand image formation depends not only on the frequency of promotional activities but also on the consistency of brand identity, the quality of consumer interactions, and the brand's ability to create emotional value that differentiates it from competitors. Therefore, the success of digital marketing in enhancing brand image is largely determined by the quality of the underlying branding strategy rather than merely by the intensity of digital media utilization.

The results of this study indicate that Product Innovation has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by [Fajar et al. \(2024\)](#), which revealed that product innovation positively and significantly enhances brand image. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is supported. These findings suggest that the higher the level of product innovation implemented by local culinary businesses, the more positive consumers' perceptions of Sumbawa traditional food brands become.

Product innovation among Sumbawa culinary businesses is generally manifested through the development of more modern and attractive packaging, improvements in presentation techniques, and menu diversification tailored to contemporary consumer preferences while preserving the authenticity of local flavors and cultural identity. These innovations not only add value for consumers but also create a more engaging and memorable consumption experience. Through innovations that are relevant to market needs and trends, consumers perceive the brand as capable of adapting to changes in the business environment and understanding customer needs more effectively. Consequently, such perceptions contribute to a favorable brand image, where consumers view the brand as more creative, innovative, responsive to change, and superior in quality compared to its competitors.

This finding is supported by evidence that consumers tend to evaluate brands more positively when they consistently introduce innovations that match market demands ([Abualbasal & Hasan, 2024](#)). Continuous innovation can enhance consumer experiences and strengthen perceived value, thereby contributing to a stronger brand image in consumers' minds. Accordingly, the greater a company's capability to deliver relevant product innovations, the stronger the brand image that is formed among consumers.

The research findings indicate that Digital Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. Therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that digital marketing plays a crucial role in encouraging consumers to purchase local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency. These results are consistent with the study conducted by [Martha et al. \(2023\)](#), which found that digital marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions among food-related MSMEs.

Digital marketing provides consumers with easy access to various types of information needed in the purchasing process, including product details, pricing, sales locations, promotional offers, and reviews from other consumers. The availability of such information facilitates consumers in the information search and alternative evaluation stages before making a purchase decision. Furthermore, digital platforms enable direct interaction between consumers and business owners, thereby enhancing trust and confidence in purchasing decisions.

The respondents' characteristics can also explain the effectiveness of digital marketing observed in this study. Most respondents had relatively high educational attainment, with 65% holding a bachelor's degree and 28% having completed senior high school. This condition indicates that most respondents are familiar with digital technologies and social media as primary sources of information in their daily lives. Such a high level of digital literacy makes consumers more responsive to various marketing activities conducted through digital platforms.

In the digital era, building a strong brand image depends not only on the frequency of promotional activities but also on the consistency of brand identity, the quality of consumer engagement, and the brand's ability to generate emotional value that distinguishes it from competitors. Accordingly, the effectiveness of digital marketing in strengthening brand image is determined primarily by the quality of the underlying branding strategy rather than by the intensity of digital media use alone. Therefore, practitioners should integrate clear brand identity elements with consistent messaging across all digital touchpoints to move beyond superficial content dissemination and establish a more distinctive brand presence ([Rizieq et al., 2025](#)).

The research findings indicate that Product Innovation does not significantly affect Purchase Decisions; consequently, the fourth hypothesis is rejected. This result suggests that the product innovations implemented by local culinary businesses have not been sufficient to directly encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. The finding is consistent with a previous study, which reported that product innovation does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decisions ([Mahendra et al., 2021](#)).

These findings imply that the success of product innovation is not solely determined by the presence of product modifications or improvements, but also by the extent to which such innovations create value that is relevant to consumers. Although some local culinary businesses have implemented various forms of innovation, such as packaging development, the introduction of new flavor variants, and the use of trending ingredients, these innovations do not necessarily lead to higher purchase decisions if they fail to align with consumers' needs, preferences, and expectations regarding the products offered.

For local culinary products, consumers often value authenticity more than changes that substantially alter the product's original characteristics. [Santosa et al. \(2024\)](#) found that consumers tend to seek authentic culinary experiences through original ingredients, traditional recipes, and flavors that preserve a region's cultural identity. This suggests that certain core elements of a product should be maintained to avoid diminishing the traditional value that drives its primary appeal. Furthermore, the historical and cultural attributes associated with a product may also play an important role in consumers' purchasing decisions.

For example, traditional snacks that have historically been wrapped in palm leaves can be enhanced with more modern, hygienic outer packaging while still retaining the palm-leaf wrapping as a distinctive product identity. Similarly, Sumbawan traditional foods, which are

characterized by their strong sour and spicy flavors, may experience lower consumer acceptance if subjected to overly radical innovations, such as combining them with ingredients that are inconsistent with the product's original characteristics. Therefore, product innovation should be implemented selectively and incrementally, for instance through improvements in packaging design, enhancements in presentation quality, the introduction of flavor variants that remain consistent with the product's original characteristics, or the development of different product sizes without compromising the distinctive taste that consumers have come to recognize and appreciate.

The research results indicate that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision; therefore, the fifth hypothesis is accepted. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by [Yuwana and Brahmayanti \(2025\)](#), which revealed that brand image positively and significantly influences purchase decisions. These results suggest that the more favorable the brand image of local culinary products based on local wisdom in Sumbawa Regency, the more likely consumers are to purchase these products.

A strong brand image can create positive perceptions of a product's quality, uniqueness, and credibility in consumers' minds. When consumers perceive a local culinary product as having a good reputation and representing the identity of its region, their level of trust in the product increases. This trust subsequently becomes an important factor that encourages consumers to choose and purchase the product.

In the context of local culinary consumers in Sumbawa Regency, the influence of brand image on purchase decisions can be explained by the strong attachment of the local community to traditional culinary products, which have become an integral part of the region's culture and identity. Although various modern culinary products continue to emerge, the people of Sumbawa tend to maintain their preference for traditional local foods. This phenomenon can be observed in the numerous culinary businesses that have experienced temporary popularity and a rapid increase in customer visits, only to face a decline in patronage once the trend subsided or when product innovation was not sustained. In contrast, traditional culinary products continue to enjoy relatively stable demand because they are deeply embedded in the daily lives and cultural practices of the community.

One example that illustrates the strong image of local culinary products is *Sepat*, a traditional Sumbawan dish that is frequently consumed, particularly during the month of Ramadan. *Sepat* is prepared from grilled fish served in a savory and sour broth, complemented by various local ingredients such as bilimbi (*Averrhoa bilimbi*), young mango, grilled eggplant, basil leaves, and *ruku* leaves, which provide its distinctive aroma. The unique taste and cultural values embodied in this dish make *Sepat* more than merely a food product; it represents the culinary identity of the Sumbawan people. This condition strengthens the image of local culinary brands in consumers' minds.

The strong brand image of local culinary products enables them to remain top-of-mind among the people of Sumbawa despite the growing availability of modern food alternatives. When a brand image is favorable and consistent with consumer preferences, consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases and develop loyalty toward the product. These preferences encourage consumers to keep choosing the same product, reinforcing the brand's position in their primary memory and sustaining top-of-mind awareness ([Yi et al., 2022](#)). Accordingly, strengthening brand image through the preservation of local cultural values, consistent product quality, and positive consumption experiences is an important strategy for local culinary entrepreneurs

seeking to increase consumers' purchase decisions.

The research findings indicate that Brand Image does not mediate the relationship between Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision; consequently, the sixth hypothesis is rejected. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by ([Muti & Firmansyah, 2025](#)), which reported that brand image does not function as a mediating variable in the relationship between digital marketing and consumers' purchase decisions. These results suggest that the digital marketing activities implemented by local culinary businesses in Sumbawa Regency have not been sufficiently effective in developing a strong brand image that can mediate the influence of digital marketing on purchase decisions. Instead, consumers may make purchasing decisions based directly on the information and convenience provided through digital marketing activities, without first evaluating the corresponding brand image. Accessible product information, attractive promotional campaigns, informative content, and convenient transactions through digital platforms may directly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

This finding is further corroborated by a study demonstrating that brand image did not mediate the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decisions, as other factors exerted a stronger influence on consumer behavior ([Febrianti & Darda, 2026](#)). These results indicate that the effectiveness of digital marketing among local culinary businesses in Sumbawa Regency does not necessarily depend on their capacity to establish a strong brand image. Instead, social and situational factors within the digital environment shape its influence. Because digital marketing activities are conducted primarily through social media platforms, consumers tend to consider customer reviews, user comments, likes, shared content, and recommendations from friends and online communities when assessing products and making purchase decisions.

This pattern indicates that social proof may exert a stronger influence than brand perceptions developed through digital marketing. Thus, although digital marketing can enhance product visibility and improve access to information, its influence on purchase decisions is more likely to occur directly than through the prior formation of brand image. These findings further suggest that consumers place greater importance on the credibility of information and the experiences of other users communicated through digital media than on brand image when making purchase decisions. Accordingly, strategies focused on increasing consumer engagement, managing customer reviews, and cultivating positive interactions on social media may be effective in stimulating purchase decisions, alongside efforts directed toward strengthening brand image ([Ramdani & Kusumahadi, 2023](#)).

The results indicate that Brand Image does not mediate the relationship between Product Innovation and Purchase Decision; consequently, the seventh hypothesis is rejected. This finding suggests that, although product innovation may improve consumers' perceptions of a brand, the resulting enhancement in brand image is insufficient to influence their purchasing decisions. This result is consistent with previous research, which found that brand image does not necessarily serve as an effective mediating mechanism in shaping purchase decisions. ([Akbar et al., 2021](#)).

This condition implies that consumers recognize and appreciate the innovations introduced by the business, leading to more favorable evaluations of the brand. However, these positive perceptions are not the primary determinants of their purchasing decisions. In the context of local culinary products in Sumbawa Regency, consumers tend to place greater emphasis on functional and tangible factors, such as product quality, taste, price, product availability, and previous consumption experiences, when deciding whether to purchase a product.

The insignificant mediating role of brand image may also be attributed to the relatively weak brand identity of many local culinary businesses. Findings from the study indicate that many local culinary products still use generic business names, lack distinctive taglines, and lack consistent visual branding elements such as logos, packaging designs, and promotional materials. As a result, the innovations introduced by these businesses are not effectively translated into a strong and memorable brand image. Consequently, consumers are more likely to recognize and evaluate products based on their physical attributes and functional benefits rather than on brand-related associations.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that product innovation does not automatically lead to purchase decisions by enhancing brand image. The effectiveness of innovation in influencing consumer behavior depends largely on a firm's ability to establish a clear, distinctive, and consistent brand identity. Without a strong brand image, product innovations may be perceived merely as improvements in product attributes rather than as value-enhancing elements that strengthen consumer-brand relationships. Therefore, local culinary businesses should complement their innovation strategies with comprehensive branding efforts, including distinctive brand names, memorable logos, compelling taglines, and consistent marketing communications. Such initiatives can help transform product innovations into stronger brand perceptions, thereby increasing their potential impact on consumers' purchase decisions.

From the perspective of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory, the finding that Brand Image fails to mediate the relationship between Product Innovation and Purchase Decision indicates that product innovation as a stimulus (S) is capable of influencing consumers' internal states (O), as reflected in improved brand perceptions and a more favorable brand image. However, these changes within the organism are not sufficiently strong to generate a behavioral response (R) in the form of a purchase decision. In the context of local wisdom-based culinary products in Sumbawa Regency, consumers tend to place greater emphasis on functional attributes, such as taste, product quality, price, authenticity, and previous consumption experiences, rather than on brand perceptions when making purchasing decisions. Consequently, although product innovation contributes to the formation of positive brand evaluations, the psychological processes occurring at the organism stage do not develop into a significant behavioral intention to purchase.

This finding suggests that within the SOR framework, the relationship between stimulus and response does not necessarily operate through the mediating mechanism of brand image, particularly when consumers are more oriented toward tangible product benefits than symbolic brand associations. Therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of product innovation in stimulating purchase decisions, business owners should integrate innovation initiatives with consistent branding strategies. Such efforts can strengthen the positive perceptions formed at the organism stage and increase the likelihood that they will translate into actual purchasing behavior.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of Digital Marketing and Product Innovation on Purchase Decisions, with Brand Image serving as a mediating variable among consumers of local wisdom-based culinary products in Sumbawa Regency. The findings reveal that Digital Marketing does not significantly influence Brand Image, indicating that digital marketing activities conducted by local culinary MSMEs have not been effective in establishing strong brand perceptions among consumers. In contrast, Product Innovation has a positive and

significant effect on Brand Image, suggesting that innovations in packaging, presentation, and product development help enhance consumers' perceptions of local culinary brands.

Furthermore, Digital Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions, demonstrating that digital platforms play an important role in facilitating access to information, consumer interaction, and purchasing activities. However, Product Innovation does not significantly influence Purchase Decisions, indicating that consumers tend to prioritize product authenticity, quality, taste, and cultural value over innovation when purchasing local culinary products. The findings also confirm that Brand Image positively and significantly affects Purchase Decisions, highlighting the importance of maintaining a favorable brand perception to encourage consumer purchases.

Regarding the mediating role of Brand Image, the results show that Brand Image does not mediate the relationship between Digital Marketing and Purchase Decisions, nor does it mediate the relationship between Product Innovation and Purchase Decisions. These findings suggest that consumers respond directly to digital marketing activities and product attributes without necessarily relying on brand image evaluations in their decision-making processes.

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