

# Social Media Marketing as an Antecedent of Customer Engagement, Trust, and Customer Loyalty Among Local Bakeries in Bogor City

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social media marketing in influencing customer engagement, trust, and customer loyalty among local bakery customers in Bogor City. The research aims to analyze the direct effects of social media marketing on engagement, trust, and loyalty. A quantitative approach was employed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with data collected through questionnaires. The results show that social media marketing has a significant effect on customer engagement and trust but does not directly influence customer loyalty. Customer engagement and trust also do not significantly affect loyalty. These findings imply that customer loyalty requires factors beyond digital interaction, particularly product quality and customer experience.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran pemasaran media sosial dalam memengaruhi customer engagement, kepercayaan, dan loyalitas pelanggan pada usaha bakery lokal di Kota Bogor. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh langsung pemasaran media sosial terhadap engagement, kepercayaan, dan loyalitas pelanggan. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan metode Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) melalui pengumpulan data kuesioner. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran media sosial berpengaruh signifikan terhadap customer engagement dan kepercayaan, tetapi tidak berpengaruh langsung terhadap loyalitas pelanggan. Temuan ini mengimplikasikan bahwa loyalitas pelanggan memerlukan faktor lain di luar interaksi digital, terutama kualitas produk dan pengalaman pelanggan.



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## INTRODUCTION

Food does not merely fulfill basic human needs but also plays a role in shaping and enriching social and cultural values within society (Miller, 2024). Over time, the meaning of food has shifted significantly and is no longer perceived solely as a source of energy (Frez-Muñoz et al., 2021). Food has increasingly become a medium for expressing identity, lifestyle, and social status, while food choices reflect individual preferences related to quality of life, aesthetic values, convenience, and emotional meanings derived from consumption activities (Monterrosa et al., 2020).

The bakery industry represents a segment of the food sector that produces and distributes flour-based products such as bread, cakes, and pastries through baking processes. In the modern context, bakeries are not only oriented toward meeting food needs but also toward creating customer experiences and building long-term relationships with consumers (Dávila Espuela et al., 2023). Products that were once considered daily necessities have evolved into representations of modern lifestyles that emphasize creativity, visual appeal, and experiential consumption (American Bakers Association, 2022).

Economically, the bakery industry in Indonesia has demonstrated strong growth. The national market value of bakery products is estimated to reach IDR 14 trillion, with annual growth rates ranging between 7 and 10 percent (FoodReview Indonesia, 2025). In addition,

Indonesia's bakery exports reached USD 400 million in the first half of 2025, indicating strong competitiveness in the global market (GoodStats Indonesia, 2025).

Bogor City is one of the regions experiencing rapid growth in the local bakery industry. A total of 353 bakeries operate in the city, the majority of which are small and medium enterprises with an average business age of approximately four years, indicating that many are still in the early stages of development (Rentech Digital, 2025). This condition suggests that the bakery industry in Bogor City remains in a developmental phase, making the implementation of effective marketing strategies essential for strengthening competitiveness and fostering customer loyalty.

The increasing use of social media in Indonesia has positioned digital platforms as essential tools for communication, information seeking, and promotional activities (DataReportal, 2025). Despite fluctuations in user growth over the past five years, social media remains an integral part of daily life, offering substantial opportunities for businesses to engage with customers through digital channels (DataReportal, 2025). For the bakery industry, this environment creates significant potential for building closer relationships with customers through social media-based marketing strategies.

However, the utilization of digital platforms by local bakeries in Bogor City remains relatively limited. Only around one-quarter of registered bakeries have websites, and social media usage is uneven, with Instagram being the most commonly used platform, followed by Facebook, while other platforms remain largely underutilized (Rentech Digital, 2025). This condition indicates a gap between the substantial potential of digital media and the ability of bakery businesses to leverage it effectively for marketing purposes.

Several local bakeries in Bogor City have begun to utilize social media to introduce products and build relationships with customers through visually engaging content and interactive communication. Nevertheless, these practices are not yet widespread, and most bakery businesses have not fully optimized digital platforms as part of their marketing strategies. This situation highlights the importance of examining social media marketing as a strategic approach for local bakeries.

Social media marketing refers to a digital marketing approach that utilizes social media platforms to deliver information, present visual content, and establish two-way communication with customers (Jamil et al., 2022). Through creative content distribution, social media marketing enables businesses to reach broader audiences without geographic limitations and to showcase product uniqueness and brand identity. For local bakeries, this approach plays a crucial role in strengthening brand image and delivering relevant consumption experiences.

Social media marketing activities have the potential to foster customer engagement, which is reflected through customers' attention, interest, and active interaction with brands on digital platforms (Vinerean & Opreana, 2021). In the bakery industry, customer engagement indicates how customers respond to brand identity and content presented through social media channels.

In addition to engagement, trust represents a key factor in building sustainable customer relationships. Trust refers to customers' belief that a brand is reliable, honest, and consistent in meeting expectations, particularly in digital environments where purchasing decisions are often based on online information (Haudi et al., 2022). For bakery businesses, trust can be developed through transparent product information, consistent communication, and credible brand presentation on social media.

Customer engagement and trust are essential antecedents of customer loyalty, which reflects customers' commitment to repeatedly choose a brand despite the availability of alternatives (Dávila Espuela et al., 2023). Customer loyalty is manifested through repeat purchases, long-term relationships, and positive attitudes toward brands. In the context of local bakeries, loyal customers not only contribute to sustained sales but also strengthen brand reputation through recommendations and positive reviews.

Previous studies have demonstrated that consistent social media marketing activities can enhance customer engagement and strengthen trust through transparent communication and

ongoing interaction (Banerji & Singh, 2024). Furthermore, customer engagement and trust play significant roles in fostering customer loyalty, particularly in industries that rely on close relationships with consumers (Ibrahim et al., 2025). However, empirical studies examining these relationships within the context of local bakery businesses, particularly in Bogor City, remain limited.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the role of social media marketing in influencing customer engagement, trust, and customer loyalty in local bakeries in Bogor City. By focusing on the local bakery context, this research seeks to provide empirical insights into how digital marketing strategies can be leveraged to build long-term customer relationships in small and medium-sized food businesses.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with a causal explanatory approach, aiming to examine the causal relationships between social media marketing, customer engagement, trust, and customer loyalty among local bakery customers in Bogor City. The research object of this study was customers of local bakeries who actively use social media and have prior purchasing experience. The unit of analysis was individual consumers, while the observation unit consisted of respondents who met specific criteria related to social media usage and purchasing behavior.

The research variables consisted of Social Media Marketing as an exogenous variable, Customer Engagement and Trust as mediating variables, and Customer Loyalty as the endogenous variable. Social Media Marketing was operationally defined as the company's marketing activities conducted through social media platforms, measured using five dimensions: interaction, entertainment, word of mouth, customization, and trendiness. Customer Engagement was defined as the level of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of customers in interacting with bakery brands on social media. Trust referred to customers' belief in the reliability, honesty, and credibility of the bakery brand, while Customer Loyalty was defined as customers' commitment to repurchase and maintain long-term relationships with the brand. All variables were measured using indicators adapted from prior validated studies and assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

All measurement scales were adapted from previous validated studies. Social Media Marketing (5 dimensions: interaction, entertainment, word of mouth, customization, and trendiness) was measured using items adapted from Jamil et al. (2022) and Kim and Ko (2012). Customer Engagement (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions) was adapted from Vinerean and Opreana (2021). Trust was measured with items adapted from Haudi et al. (2022). Customer Loyalty was adapted from Dávila Espuela et al. (2023).

Example items for each construct (on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) are as follows:

- Social Media Marketing (Interaction): "The local bakery actively responds to comments and messages on its social media accounts."
- Customer Engagement: "I feel emotionally connected to the local bakery brand through its social media content."
- Trust: "I believe the local bakery is honest and reliable based on the information shared on social media."
- Customer Loyalty: "I will continue to choose this local bakery over others even if alternatives are available."

The analysis followed a two-step approach: first evaluating the measurement model (validity and reliability), then testing the structural model. Construct validity was assessed through standardized factor loadings, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity was examined via Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

The data used in this study were primary data collected through an online survey. The data source was individual respondents who followed at least one local bakery's social media account in Bogor City and had purchased bakery products at least twice within the last three months. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, as respondents were selected based on predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. A total of 242 valid responses were obtained and used for data analysis, which meets the minimum sample requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, with respondents selected based on the following criteria: (1) actively following at least one local bakery's social media account in Bogor City, and (2) having purchased bakery products from local bakeries in Bogor at least twice within the last three months. A total of 242 valid responses were collected and used for data analysis.

The sample size of 242 respondents meets the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on the rule of thumb suggested by Hair et al. (2010), which recommends a minimum of 10 respondents per estimated parameter or indicator in the model.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	98	40.5
	Female	144	59.5
<b>Age</b>	18–24 years	112	46.3
	25–34 years	89	36.8
	35–44 years	29	12.0
	45 years and above	12	5.0
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	76	31.4
	Private Employee	68	28.1
	Entrepreneur	45	18.6
	Housewife	27	11.2
	Others	26	10.7
<b>Frequency of Purchase</b>	2–3 times in 3 months	98	40.5
	4–6 times in 3 months	79	32.6
	More than 6 times in 3 months	65	26.9
<b>Most Used Social Media</b>	Instagram	167	69.0
	TikTok	38	15.7
	Facebook	24	9.9
	Others	13	5.4

Source: Data processed (2025)

The majority of respondents were female (59.5%), aged between 18–34 years (83.1%), and students or private employees. Instagram was the most frequently used social media platform

(69.0%). This demographic profile reflects the typical users of social media and young consumers of local bakery products in urban areas.

The findings of this study are generalizable to customers of local bakeries in Bogor City who actively engage with bakery social media accounts and have recent purchasing experience, rather than to all bakery consumers in Indonesia.

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed online. Prior to hypothesis testing, the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability testing. Construct validity was assessed using factor loading values, while reliability was evaluated using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency among indicators.

The data analysis technique employed in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which allows for simultaneous testing of multiple relationships among latent variables. The analysis was conducted through several stages, including descriptive statistical analysis, measurement model evaluation, goodness-of-fit assessment, and structural model testing to examine the proposed hypotheses. The use of SEM was considered appropriate due to its ability to analyze complex relationships between constructs and to test mediating effects within a single analytical framework.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between social media marketing, customer engagement, trust, and customer loyalty among local bakery customers in Bogor City. Prior to testing the proposed hypotheses, the overall model fit was evaluated.

The goodness-of-fit indices show mixed results. The absolute fit measures indicate good fit with  $CMIN/DF = 2.122 (\leq 3.00)$  and  $RMSEA = 0.068 (\leq 0.10)$ . However, the incremental fit indices are slightly below the conventional threshold with  $IFI = 0.872$ ,  $TLI = 0.859$ , and  $CFI = 0.871$  (cut-off  $\geq 0.90$ ), indicating a marginal fit. Given the complexity of the model involving multiple constructs and mediating variables, as well as the characteristics of the sample size, the overall model is still considered acceptable for hypothesis testing. The detailed goodness-of-fit results are summarized in Table 3.

### Measurement Model Evaluation

Before testing the structural relationships, the measurement model was first evaluated to ensure reliability and validity of the constructs. The assessment included indicator reliability (factor loadings), internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability), and convergent validity (AVE).

The criteria used in this study were:

- Factor loadings  $\geq 0.70$  (loadings between 0.50–0.70 were retained only if they did not compromise AVE and CR).
- Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR)  $\geq 0.70$ .
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE)  $\geq 0.50$ .

All indicators met the required thresholds after evaluation, and no items were dropped. The detailed results of the measurement model are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Measurement Model Results (Factor Loadings, Reliability, and Convergent Validity)**

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
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<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	SMM1	0.812	0.918	0.931	0.658
	SMM2	0.835			
	SMM3	0.789			
	SMM4	0.798			
	SMM5	0.821			
<b>Customer Engagement</b>	CE1	0.847	0.892	0.907	0.664
	CE2	0.819			
	CE3	0.793			
	CE4	0.805			
<b>Trust</b>	TR1	0.862	0.905	0.921	0.703
	TR2	0.831			
	TR3	0.854			
	TR4	0.817			
<b>Customer Loyalty</b>	CL1	0.823	0.879	0.902	0.647
	CL2	0.796			
	CL3	0.811			
	CL4	0.784			

Source: Data processed using AMOS (2025)

As shown in Table 2, all factor loadings were above 0.70, Cronbach's alpha and CR values exceeded 0.80, and AVE for each construct was greater than 0.50. These results confirm that the measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and convergent validity.

With a valid and reliable measurement model confirmed, the structural model fit was then evaluated as presented in Table 3, followed by hypothesis testing in Table 5.

**Table 3. Goodness of Fit Index**

Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Result	Model Evaluation
CMIN/DF	≤ 3,00	2,122	Good Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0,10	0,068	Good Fit
IFI	≥ 0,90	0,872	Marginal Fit
TLI	≥ 0,90	0,859	Marginal Fit
CFI	≥ 0,90	0,871	Marginal Fit

Source: Data processed using AMOS (2025)

Despite the marginal incremental fit indices, the model demonstrates sufficient overall fit to proceed with the structural analysis and hypothesis testing, as the absolute fit indices meet the recommended cut-off values.

In addition to the model fit evaluation, the explanatory power of the structural model was assessed using the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ) for each endogenous variable.  $R^2$  indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the predictors in the model. Furthermore, because the research model positions Customer Engagement and Trust as potential mediators between Social Media Marketing and Customer Loyalty, indirect effects (mediation) were also examined.

The  $R^2$  values and the results of direct, indirect, and total effects are presented in Table 4. Due to the non-significant direct paths from Customer Engagement and Trust to Customer

Loyalty, the indirect effects through these mediators were also not statistically significant. However, social media Marketing still explains a substantial portion of the variance in Customer Engagement and Trust.

**Table 4. R<sup>2</sup> Values and Effects (Direct, Indirect, and Total)**

Endogenous Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Path from SMM	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Customer Engagement	0.612	SMM → Customer Engagement	0.972**	-	0.972**
Trust	0.689	SMM → Trust	0.981**	-	0.981**
Customer Loyalty	0.214	SMM → Customer Loyalty	-1.706	0.214	-1.492
		Customer Engagement → Loyalty	1.267	-	-
		Trust → Loyalty	1.448	-	-

Note: \*\* p < 0.01; Indirect effects were calculated as the product of the respective direct paths. No significant mediation effects were found.

Source: Data processed using AMOS (2025)

As shown in Table 4, social media marketing explains 61.2% of the variance in Customer Engagement and 68.9% of the variance in Trust, indicating strong explanatory power for these two variables. However, the model only explains 21.4% of the variance in Customer Loyalty (low to moderate), which supports the finding that factors beyond social media marketing, such as product quality and direct consumption experience, play a more dominant role in building loyalty.

Following the evaluation of model fit, hypothesis testing was performed to analyze the causal relationships among the research variables. The results of the structural model analysis are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Estimate	P-value	Decision
H1	Social Media Marketing → Customer Engagement	0,972	0,000	Supported
H2	Social Media Marketing → Trust	0,981	0,000	Supported
H3	Social Media Marketing → Customer Loyalty	-1,706	0,127	Not Supported
H4	Customer Engagement → Customer Loyalty	1,267	0,055	Not Supported
H5	Trust → Customer Loyalty	1,448	0,128	Not Supported

Source: Data processed using AMOS (2025)

The absence of significant direct effects from Customer Engagement and Trust to Customer Loyalty, combined with non-significant indirect effects, suggests that social media marketing influences engagement and trust but does not translate into loyalty through these mediators in the context of local bakeries in Bogor City.

The findings of this study present a counter-intuitive pattern compared to mainstream literature. While social media marketing significantly drives customer engagement ( $\beta = 0.972$ , p

< 0.001) and trust ( $\beta = 0.981$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), neither social media marketing nor its mediators (engagement and trust) significantly influence customer loyalty. This contrasts with several previous studies in the food and beverage sector that report significant positive relationships. For instance, studies in the restaurant and hospitality industry found that customer engagement and trust successfully mediate the path from social media marketing to brand loyalty (Bonavia, 2022; Kulikovskaja et al., 2023; Manyanga, 2024). Similarly, research on modern bakeries and fast-food chains often shows that digital engagement translates into loyalty through enhanced brand image and emotional connection (Yoo, 2024; Khusniah, 2024).

The difference can be attributed to the specific context of **local SMEs bakeries in Bogor City**. Unlike chain restaurants or premium F&B brands that benefit from standardized operations and higher involvement purchases, local bakeries involve frequent, low-involvement, and highly sensory-driven consumption. Customers may engage with visually appealing content and develop trust through transparent online communication, yet their loyalty is ultimately determined by tangible offline experiences—particularly consistent taste, freshness, texture, portion size, and reasonable pricing (Nindiani et al., 2018). In such settings, digital interactions build initial interest and confidence but fail to overcome the sensory evaluation that occurs during actual consumption. This explains the low explanatory power of the model on customer loyalty ( $R^2 = 0.214$ ).

From a theoretical perspective, these results suggest the existence of potential moderating factors that were not included in the current model, such as **product quality**, **in-store service experience**, and **purchase involvement**. Future research is recommended to incorporate these variables as moderators or additional antecedents to better explain the conversion from online engagement/trust to actual loyalty in the local food industry.

Practically, the findings offer clear guidance for owners of local bakeries in Bogor City. First, social media marketing should continue to be used as an effective tool to build customer engagement and trust—through interactive content, behind-the-scenes videos of the baking process, customer testimonials, and prompt responses to comments. However, these efforts must be integrated with offline excellence. Bakery owners are strongly advised to prioritize consistent product quality (especially taste and freshness), innovate menu offerings based on customer feedback, maintain competitive pricing, and improve in-store service (such as staff courtesy and store cleanliness). Only when digital engagement is supported by superior real-world experiences can trust be converted into long-term loyalty and repeat purchases. Relying solely on social media without strengthening core product and service attributes will likely result in high engagement but low retention.

The results indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement. This finding confirms the first hypothesis and suggests that marketing activities carried out through social media platforms are effective in encouraging customers to actively interact with local bakery brands. Content that is perceived as attractive, informative, and interactive tends to stimulate customers' interest and participation, thereby strengthening their engagement with the brand. This result aligns with the notion that social media functions not only as a communication channel but also as a space for building interactive relationships between brands and consumers.

In addition, the analysis shows that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on trust, supporting the second hypothesis. This result indicates that consistent and transparent communication through social media contributes to customers' confidence in local bakery brands. In the context of food-related businesses, trust is a crucial factor as consumers

tend to be sensitive to product quality, hygiene, and reliability. Social media enables businesses to communicate these aspects directly, thereby reinforcing customer trust.

However, the findings reveal that social media marketing does not have a significant direct effect on customer loyalty, leading to the rejection of the third hypothesis. This result implies that although social media marketing is successful in building engagement and trust, it does not automatically encourage customers to become loyal. Loyalty appears to be influenced by factors beyond digital exposure, such as product taste, consistency, price suitability, and overall customer experience.

Customer engagement is found to have no significant effect on customer loyalty, resulting in the rejection of the fourth hypothesis. Although customers may actively interact with bakery brands on social media, such engagement does not necessarily translate into repeat purchasing behavior or long-term commitment. This finding suggests that digital engagement may remain at the level of interaction without developing into loyalty if it is not supported by satisfactory offline experiences.

Similarly, trust does not show a significant effect on customer loyalty, leading to the rejection of the fifth hypothesis. While customers may perceive local bakery brands as trustworthy, trust alone is insufficient to foster loyalty. This indicates that trust functions as a basic requirement rather than a determining factor in encouraging loyal behavior, particularly in industries where product evaluation is strongly based on direct consumption experience.

Overall, the results demonstrate that social media marketing plays an important role in enhancing customer engagement and trust but does not directly contribute to customer loyalty among local bakery customers in Bogor City. These findings suggest that customer loyalty in the bakery industry is a complex outcome that requires the integration of effective digital marketing strategies with consistent product quality and positive customer experiences. From a theoretical perspective, this study highlights that the relationship between social media marketing and customer loyalty is not always linear. Practically, the findings imply that bakery owners should complement social media activities with improvements in product and service quality to foster long-term customer loyalty.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine the effect of social media marketing on customer engagement, trust, and customer loyalty among local bakery customers in Bogor City. Based on the results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, the findings indicate that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement and trust. These results confirm that social media marketing activities are effective in encouraging customers to interact with brands and in building customer confidence through consistent and transparent communication. However, the findings also show that social media marketing does not have a significant direct effect on customer loyalty. In addition, customer engagement and trust are found to have no significant influence on customer loyalty. These results suggest that although social media marketing succeeds in strengthening engagement and trust, these variables alone are not sufficient to drive loyal behavior among local bakery customers. Customer loyalty appears to be shaped by more complex factors that go beyond digital interaction and perceived trust, such as consistent product quality, taste, freshness, pricing, and overall offline consumption experience. These findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach that combines effective social media strategies with superior product and service delivery in the local bakery context.

From a practical perspective, these findings imply that local bakery businesses should not rely solely on social media marketing strategies to build customer loyalty. While social media remains an important tool for increasing engagement and trust, it needs to be integrated with improvements in product quality and customer experience to encourage repeat purchases and long-term commitment. For future research, it is recommended to incorporate additional variables related to experiential or product-based factors to better explain customer loyalty in the food and beverage industry. Further studies may also expand the research context to different types of businesses or regions to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that social media marketing plays a significant role in fostering customer engagement and trust among local bakery customers in Bogor City. However, these variables do not significantly translate into customer loyalty. The results highlight the contextual nature of customer behavior in the local bakery industry, where loyalty is predominantly driven by product quality, taste consistency, pricing, and offline consumption experience rather than digital interactions alone. This empirical evidence contributes to the literature by showing the limitations of social media marketing in converting engagement and trust into loyalty within small-scale, sensory-driven food businesses. For bakery entrepreneurs, the key takeaway is to adopt an integrated approach: leverage social media to attract and build trust, while continuously investing in product excellence and customer experience at the physical store to achieve sustainable loyalty. Future studies should examine potential moderating roles of product quality and in-store experience to further enrich understanding in similar contexts.

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