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Student purchase intention in higher education sector: The role of social network marketing and student engagement

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the impact of social network marketing on student purchase intention and how social network marketing also affects student engagement (as moderate variable). Unit analysis of this study includes private university students in Jakarta, Indonesia. The research method used in this study is verification approach with structural equation modelling. Data collection is accomplished through questionnaires distributed among 400 students. The results of this study show that social network marketing had significant impact on student engagement, student engagement had significant impact on consumer purchase intention, social network marketing had significant impact on student purchase intention, and there was a significant relationship between social network marketing and student purchase intention through student engagement.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia currently has had 3500 universities, while the number of high school graduates is very large and not proportional to the number of universities. According to Central Bureau of Statistics Republic of Indonesia (2018), there were around 20 million students who had not yet entered college and usually exceptionally enticing for all colleges in Indonesia and indeed overseas. Based on these statistics, each college must offer superior value to prospective students, understudies and graduates. In addition, what needs to be considered for universities is the price, reputation, location and study programs offered. The rapid development of digital technology has changed the lives of individuals in various fields as well as conventional pound. One of them is to find information. The main distinction between social media and other conventional media such as television, newspapers, magazines, billboards is that social media offers two-way communication between the company and its customers, not the one-way communication offered by traditional media. Social media could be a hopeful promoting instrument that make up customer relationship management forms and can be utilized to target particular sections of customers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Utilizing social media is much easier for marketers to reach an expansive number of individuals at exceptionally cost-effective. In addition, social media offers Web 2.0 highlights of interactive, collaborative, knowledge sharing, and other client engaging devices. Social media may

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serve as a channel for numerous marketing activities counting customer relationship management, customer service, buyer research, lead generation, sales promotion conveyance channel, paid advertising channel, and branding (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Social network marketing is associated with any marketing and communication effort that uses social media as its channel to advance a product, service, or brand. Social network marketing permits companies to form their own content through modern web technologies and disseminate them to millions of individuals without charge. Past ponders have distinguished that one who calculate influencing brand loyalty is students, as they comprise a noteworthy parcel of active users in social media (Balakrishnan et al., 2014). The youth segment moreover comprises of a portion of active buyers in different industries of products and services such as technology, sports, entertainment, clothing etc. (Bennett & Lachowetz, 2004). The youth segment has risen as a solid market portion that has the capacity to impact the purchasing and decision making of others (Loudon & Bitta, 1993; Zollo, 1995). The youth market can be considered an indicator of the encompassing cultural and social changes (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995).

The utilize of social media may influence customer purchase intentions (Toor et al., 2017). In today's marketing, expanded utilize of social media has essentially changed the way communication between sellers and buyers (the marketing field). This advancement has resulted in new potentials and opportunities in marketing and commerce that are changing the way customers react to purchase as presentation to distinctive brands of products and services (Shaw, 2012). Numerous marketing experts have considered the issue of consumer engagement, particularly those that allude to social media research (Dessart et al., 2015). This is stated in the research of the importance of a general measure of brand engagement on market behavior: development and validation of a scale by Sprott et al. (2009) which states that customer engagement can result in customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust and commitment (Brodie et al., 2013; Hapsari et al., 2017).

Over the last decade, the role of social media has expanded in developing countries. Social media has changed the way organizations and consumers are connected. As individual consumers have a stage to improve their voice in a way better access to product information and purchasing decisions (Wang et al., 2012). The foremost prevailing social media utilized in Indonesia as well as within the world is Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and blog. Until April 2019, the number of Facebook users from Indonesia reached 120 million accounts (Clement, 2019). Internet users in Indonesia are always increasing every year. From 1998 to 2018 there was an increase in internet users by 285.6%. Based on data from APJII (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia), the majority of Internet users are still from the urban community aged from 19 to 34 years as 84.67 percent where 82.6 percent hold senior high school and diploma graduates (Indonesia, 2018). At some universities and vocational colleges, the internet has indeed become an important part of the teaching and learning process.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Network Marketing to Student Engagement

Social media has an impact on students' emotion. Presently, numerous highly educated teachers are connected with their students through social media by posting news or updates about the world of education. Within the marketing meaning, the interaction of buyer and seller at social media will make an engagement and in case they dealt with as professionally can lead to an emotional and long-run. Numerous researchers have stated that engaged clients are not just satisfied or loyal, but they are emotionally connected to the organization's brands or services (Barhemmati & Ahmad, 2015). Social network marketing activities can direct students to ended up more involved in social media sites, so that students can be actively included in giving valuable feedback on certain brands and products (Toor et al., 2017). This

statement is related with Howard Rheingold who stated: "what are the benefits of social media to student? He muses. there are plenty: greater student engagement greater student interest, student taking more control of their education and more responsibility for their education" (Blankenship, 2011).

2.2 Social Network Marketing to Student Purchase Intention

The high stream of information on the market and various choices, consumers confront the abundance information in making purchasing decisions. Since it is exceptionally practical and flexible, social media has been broadly utilized as a marketing communication. The benefits of utilizing social media incorporate no confinements on time, place, media and costs (Kim & Ko, 2012). Therefore, social media is presently broadly utilized to communicate and promote products and services (Karimi & Naghibi, 2015; Pentina & Koh, 2012). Nowadays, social media is considered the main source of information for customers when they need to buy back or in the process of making a purchasing decision (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016). Through social media, customers can effortlessly learn about the companies and products they like (Paquette, 2013), indeed shopper behavior and perceptions can be anticipated through information posted through social media platforms (Malthouse et al., 2013). Today's phenomenon, consumers utilize social media during the purchasing process such as gathering data, assessing choices, and selecting the finest alternative to post individual experiences on social media as a post-purchase process (Drews & Schemer, 2010).

2.3 Student Engagement to Purchase Intention

Each understudy encompasses a diverse behavior in terms of value and price and a few of them continuously value the quality of products or services, but a few of those who utilize the web and social networks, are exceptionally concerned approximately how universities communicate and respect students both physically and virtually. The conventional way to reach customers through mass media has ended up less viable in recent years (Phillips & Noble, 2007) and social network marketing has ended up one of the most current methods that encompasses a more profound affecting on students than conventional methods. Social media have colossal impact on each stage of the consumers decision making process, to make common opinion and attitude (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Bhagat et al. (2009) argue that consumers interest in conventional media has declined and shifted to social media because of its personalized features and controls. Consumers involvement is a vital component and incorporates a solid meaning. Since there's a media fragmentation due to the accessibility of some media options there will be a diminish in customer devotion. Businesses must refine their marketing endeavors to engage consumers since consumers are more loyal and emotionally connected with brands (Sorenson & Adkins, 2014).

3. Research Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the construct of research framework and hypothesis is as follows

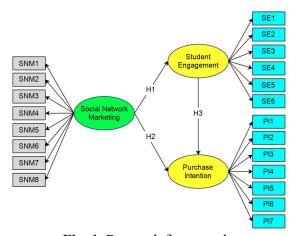


Fig. 1. Research framework

Hypotheses that can be built based on the theory and previous research are as follow:

H₁: Social network marketing has a significant impact on students' engagement.

H₂: Students' engagement has a significant impact on students' purchase intention.

H₃: Social network marketing has a significant impact on students' purchase intention.

4. Methodology and Measurement

Primary data obtained from the questionnaire were observational with data collection using cross sectional. The questionnaire was distributed to 400 active students at private universities in Jakarta with proportional stratified random sampling. The scale used to measure variables was semantic with a range of 5 from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement of social network marketing that we modified belongs to Kim and Ko (2012) and Ahmed and Zahid (2014) with eight indicators. Furthermore, measuring the student engagement is adopted from Weman (2011) and Gummerus et al. (2012) with six indicators. For student purchase intentions, we modified a questionnaire from McKnight and Chervany (2001); Yoo and Donthu (2001); Wang and Chang (2013) with seven indicators. From a number of references and several researchers, we adjust ourselves in the context of higher education. The data collected from the sample was tested for validity and reliability. Finally, the data was analyzed by structural equation modeling (SEM) with Lisrel 8.71 and conduct mediation test.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1. Social Media

Social media distribution is often used by students. Most respondents use Instagram as much as 40%, followed by Facebook for as much as 25%, LinkedIn for as much as 21%, twitter for as much as 10% and Google + for as much as 4%.

Table 1Crosstabulation Frequency Use Social Media and Flatform Social Media

		Social media			Total		
		Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	LinkedIn	Others	
< 1 Hour	Count	0	0	0	40	16	56
	Percentage	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
1 - 3 Hour	Count	60	0	40	44	0	144
	Percentage	41.7%	0.0%	27.8%	30.6%	0.0%	100.0%
> 3 Hour	Count	40	160	0	0	0	200
	Percentage	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	100	160	40	84	16	400
	Percentage	25.0%	40.0%	10.0%	21.0%	4.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data. 2019

80% of the students who access Instagram on a single day, spend an average of at least 3 hours. Whereas those who access Facebook on average 1 - 3 hours a day are accounted for 41.7 percent. Students access Instagram and Facebook, besides communicating with peers, also receive updated information from their colleges.

5.2. Testing of Research Instruments

Confirmatory factor analysis with first order is used for validity and reliability tests. Research model is constructed by 21 item battery. All the indicators in each construct have resulted in the value of loading factor bigger than 0.5 so there is no indicator excluded from the model (see Table 2).

Table 2

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis First Order

Construct	Indicator	λ	λ^2	e	CR	VE
	SNM1	0.82	0.67	0.36	0.964	
	SNM2	0.85	0.72	0.25		
	SNM3	0.83	0.69	0.26		
Sanial Naturals Madestina	SNM4	0.91	0.83	0.17		0.770
Social Network Marketing	SNM5	0.92	0.85	0.12		0.770
	SNM6	0.88	0.77	0.23		
	SNM7	0.88	0.77	0.19		
	SNM8	0.86	0.74	0.23		
	SE1	0.91	0.83	0.18	0.961	
	SE2	0.93	0.86	0.14		
C4-1-4-E	SE3	0.90	0.81	0.19		0.004
Student Engagement	SE4	0.88	0.77	0.22		0.804
	SE5	0.88	0.77	0.23		
	SE6	0.88	0.77	0.22		
	PI1	0.87	0.76	0.24		
	PI2	0.87	0.76	0.24	0.958	
Student Purchase Intention	PI3	0.93	0.86	0.14		
	PI4	0.91	0.83	0.18		0.764
	PI5	0.86	0.74	0.26		
	PI6	0.85	0.72	0.27		
	PI7	0.82	0.67	0.32		

Source: Primary Data. 2019

5.3. Testing of Research Hypotheses

Based on the results of goodness of fit (GOF) with nine criteria of the measured index, there are two indices that do not meet the requirements, namely Chi-Square-value and Sig. Probability. But there are nine indices that meet the requirements. The expected of Chi-Square-value for GOF is smaller than Chi-Square-table and Sig. probability is greater than 0.05. Hair et al. (2013)explain that Chi-Square is very sensitive with large samples. If the sample is more than 200, Chi-Square must be accompanied by another test equipment. Since this study used 400 samples, so the Chi-Square and Sig Probability values are ineffectively, but still be considered valid since the other nine criteria tested have met requirements.

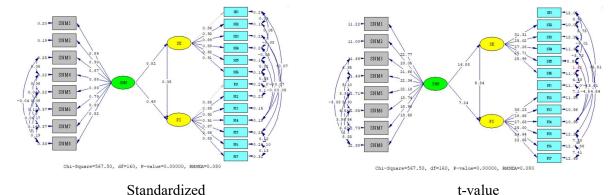


Fig. 2. Final Model

From final model (see Fig. 2), social network marketing influences student engagement with the coefficient value 0.82 and t-value 16.88. Social network marketing influences student purchase intention with the coefficient value 0.48 and t-value 7.24 and student engagement influences student purchase intention with the coefficient value 0.35 and t-value 5.34. It means all the inter-variable relationships are significant since the t-value is bigger than the cut off 1.96. Based on the structural equation of student engagement the value of R-Square is found 0.67 meaning that social network marketing contributed 67% to increasing student engagement. Whereas from the structural equation of student purchase intention the value of R-Square is found 0.63 meaning that the social network marketing and student engagement contribute 63% to create student purchase intention. The other factors have impacts to student engagement and purchase intention namely service quality or service learning, relationship quality, etc. Student engagement plays a mediating role on the relationship of social network marketing toward the student purchase intention because the value

of direct relationship, which is initially significant, is still significant but decreasing after being added to student engagement. See Table 4.

Table 3Goodness of Fit Statistics

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut of Value	Result	Information	
Chi-Square	v			
Chi-Square	X ² < X ² table	567.59	Poorly	
Sig. Probability	P > 0.05	0.00	Poorly	
Absolute Fit Measures				
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.880	Marginal	
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.080	Good	
Normed Chi-Square	< 2 or < 5	3.802	Good	
Incremental Fit Indices				
NFI	0.90	0.98	Good	
NNFI	0.90	0.98	Good	
CFI	0.90	0.99	Good	
RFI	0.90	0.98	Good	
Parsimony Fit Indices				
AGFI	0 - 1	0.88	Properly	
PNFI	0 - 1	0.75	Properly	

Source: Primary Data. 2019

Table 4Mediation Test

Path	Direct		Indirect	
raui	Coefficient	t-value	Coefficient	t-value
Social network marketing →student engagement → student purchase intention	0.82	16.88	0.28	5.24

Source: Primary Data. 2019

5.4. Discussion

This research is a review from the perceptions of students when they make decision to become students at private colleges in Jakarta. Learning how the behavior of student purchase intentions in higher education, the study has examined the relationship between social network marketing, student purchase intentions and student engagement. The results of this ponder demonstrate that student engagement is one of the critical factors to influence on student purchase intentions in higher education. Moreover, the role of student engagement as arbiter can clarify how colleges use social media marketing as an apparatus to extend student purchase intention. The results of the ponder demonstrate that social networking marketing encompasses a significant impact on students' purchase intention at private colleges in Jakarta. This finding appears that students at private colleges in Jakarta, Indonesia can be impacted by online communication through social media sites. During interaction, students can communicate and share their learning experiences and intentions to learn within the department provided by the college. In this manner it can be concluded that this interaction can influence students in forming their purchase intentions. The discoveries of this study support previous research (Alalwan, 2018; Gautam & Sharma, 2017; Ngai et al., 2015; Toor et al., 2017). The platform offered by social media such as Instagram and Facebook are able to create viral effects and offer assistance to students in Jakarta, Indonesia opens up to colleges that create positive attitudes towards purchasing efforts. In line with previous research (Bado & Nyangau, 2012; Smedescu, 2014; Subramani, 2015), this study found that social network marketing was significantly related to consumer engagement. At present, most students in Indonesia spend time interacting with online communities through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (See Table 1). With features available on social networking sites, students can connect and exchange information instantly with peer and family through video uploads and stories or college experiences. This study explains that students' engagement is positively related to student purchase intentions. This result supports Chen (2017) who explained customer engagement in social media which explains consumer engagement on social media serves as an important factor in generating consumer purchase intentions. This statement is generalized as students who regularly communicate utilizing social media have also a propensity to create purchases.

5.5. Conclusion and limitation research

From the research, it can be concluded that the social network marketing significantly influenced student engagement and impact to student purchase intention. Student engagement is a mediating function between social network marketing to student purchase intention. The student engagement on higher education will decide whether they will purchase or not depending on the activities of institutions in social network marketing. For higher education institutions, by actualizing social media marketing activities through posting videos, news and information about their institutions will have an impact on students' deliberate to enter the college. There are a few limitations that must be highlighted indeed in spite of the fact that this demonstrates fit when Normed Chi Square is less than 5.0 and RMSEA is less than or break even with 0.08 but Chi Square value and Sig. Probability was poorly, but observational results are considered fit. This can be clarified by the fundamental relationship within the model but has not been captured. Moreover, data was collected from surveys with 400 students. Data quality is very dependent on the attitude of the respondents who took part in the survey. In this manner, future researchers must include more variables and relationships between variables, specifically the relationship between benefit learning and relationship quality. Surveys can be conducted in larger samples to diminish data bias and the application of in-depth interviews to capture the fundamental information to better clarify the connections between variables.

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