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The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship Between Content, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Decisions: A Case Study of Asinan Aing Medan

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how content and brand awareness influence purchasing decisions, examining both direct pathways and indirect effects mediated by purchase intention among patrons of Asinan Aing Medan. A quantitative explanatory research methodology was implemented, utilizing primary data obtained via questionnaires administered to 180 participants recruited through purposive sampling. Findings demonstrate that content marketing exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention, whereas brand awareness similarly demonstrates a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention. Additionally, content marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention each demonstrate positive and statistically significant effects on purchase decision. Findings demonstrate that content marketing and brand awareness have positive direct associations with purchase decisions, while purchase intention exerts a statistically significant indirect effect that mediates these relationships within a cross-sectional framework. These results suggest that digital content and brand awareness may facilitate consumers' purchasing decisions through both direct mechanisms and indirect pathways involving the cultivation of purchase intention. The research offers actionable recommendations for culinary small and medium enterprises aiming to enhance their digital marketing initiatives, strengthen brand recognition, and cultivate consumer purchase intention.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Content, Purchase Decision, Purchase Intention, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) constitute the backbone of the national economy. Within Indonesia, SMEs represent a vital component for economic development. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute a fundamental pillar of Indonesia's economic framework. Additionally, MSMEs play a significant role in advancing economic equity through their widespread presence across all geographical regions of Indonesia, encompassing remote, rural, and suburban communities (Biro DTI, 2025).

In the city of Medan, food-related MSMEs represent the largest category of businesses. This sector is experiencing consistent growth, largely due to the widespread recognition of Medan’s cuisine for its exceptional flavors throughout Indonesia. Despite this reputation, Medan's signature pickled dish, known as asinan, is not as widely recognized as pickled dishes from other regions. Asinan is a food item created through a pickling process, which can involve salting or acidifying with vinegar, and includes a variety of vegetables and fruits as its ingredients (Astuti, 2023). In the realm of Indonesian culinary art, asinan is regarded as one of the hallmark dishes. One notable asinan business in Medan is Asinan Aing

Asinan Aing is situated at Jalan Madong Lubis No. 50, Pandau Hulu I, Medan Kota District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20233, and has been operational since 2020. Presently, Asinan Aing markets its products both in-store and online via the Grab and Gojek applications. Their most popular offering is Asinan Kiamboy, which has become the brand's signature product. According to an interview with the owner, the decline in sales was perceived to be associated with increasing competition from other culinary brands and relatively limited customer engagement with the company's social media content. These explanations represent the owner's perception rather than an empirically established causal relationship.

Table 1.
Asinan Aing's Sales Data

Year	Sales (Qty)	Sales (Rp)
2021	4.380	153.300.000
2022	5.475	191.625.000
2023	5.100	178.850.000
2024	6.570	229.950.000
2025	5.840	204.400.000

Source: Asinan Aing, 2026

Table 1 indicates that sales volume decreased by approximately 11.1% from 6,570 units in 2024 to 5,840 units in 2025, while sales revenue declined from IDR 229.95 million to IDR 204.40 million. According to an interview with the owner, this reduction is attributed to brand competition, particularly due to the presence of larger brands in Medan, such as Asinan Kho and Rujak Aceh LLF, along with insufficient customer engagement on social media, stemming from content that does not achieve viral status.

In the digital era, consumer behavior has grown increasingly intricate, as purchasing decisions are now shaped by a blend of rational, emotional, social, and technological influences (Simson & Nainggolan, 2025). Situmorang (2022) defines a purchase decision as a problem-solving process through which consumers select among alternative courses of action to fulfill their needs. Consumers aiming to buy a product will look for companies that offer the greatest value, as this can enhance their willingness to make repeat purchases of the products offered since consumers believe that the company is attentive to their current and future needs and will thus provide optimal offerings (Manik et al., 2022). Various factors, including social media content and brand awareness, can influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Purchase intention is a fundamental factor influencing business success and sustainability, as it ultimately determines customers' purchasing choices. As noted by Saputra et al. (2023), purchase intention encompasses consumer behavior that arises when individuals are influenced by external stimuli and subsequently make a purchase based on their personal decision-making traits and processes. Consumers engage in various assessments to identify the products they wish to acquire and the criteria they will apply in their purchasing decisions (Nainggolan et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of a company's marketing efforts is significantly reliant on the strategies and tactics it adopts; by employing appropriate marketing approaches, a business can successfully and sustainably generate, sustain, and expand consumer demand (Situmorang, 2021). Beyond being a medium for interaction and content dissemination, social media plays a crucial role in the business landscape, particularly in sales (Tan & Nainggolan, 2023). Kumalasanti (2022) asserts that the role and objective of content marketing are to inform consumers and act as a conduit between producers and consumers, facilitating a pleasant communication experience through the information provided by the content. Captivating content marketing ignites consumer interest, serving as a link that ultimately sways consumers' purchasing choices (Mukarromah et al., 2022). By utilizing digital platforms, culinary entrepreneurs can

connect with new consumers, creatively present their offerings, and improve the efficiency of their marketing strategies (Nainggolan et al., 2025).
The content that Asinan Aing typically shares on TikTok and Instagram since 2024 showcases products accompanied by trending sounds from social media, along with narratives about the daily life of the business owner.

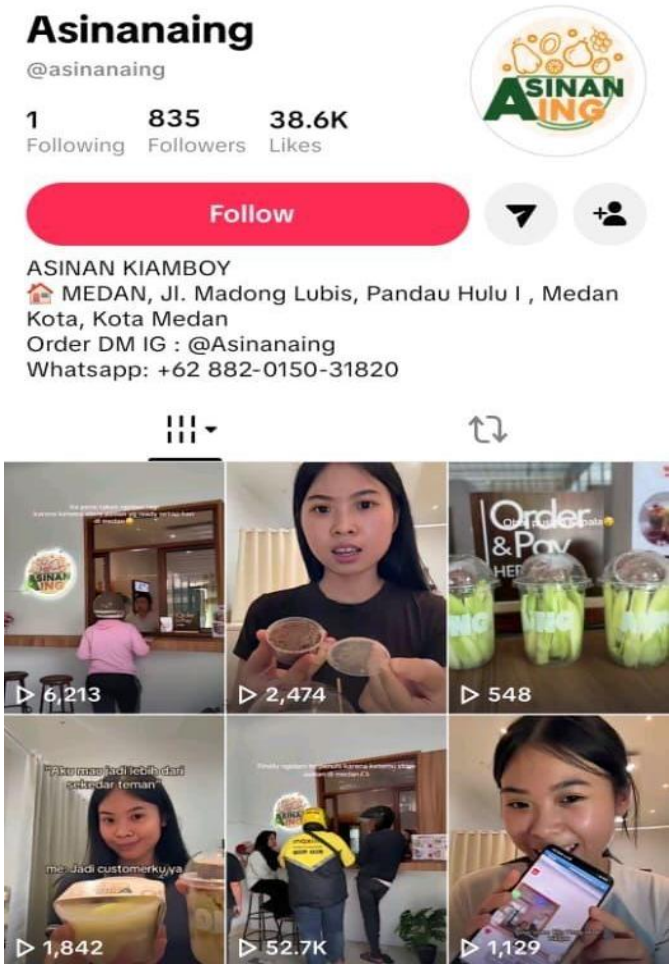


Figure 1. Content typically created by the owner of Asinan Aing (source: TikTok)

Beyond merely reinforcing the brand name in the minds of consumers, companies must also cultivate an understanding of the brand. According to Dwiputri et al. (2024), brand awareness refers to a potential buyer's ability to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category. The higher the level of a customer's understanding of a brand, the greater the likelihood that they will purchase the company's product. Elevated brand awareness strengthens the brand's presence in consumers' minds when they consider a product (Arianty & Andira, 2021). Currently, Asinan Aing's brand awareness is relatively low, as indicated by Google search results that do not feature the Asinan Aing brand when searching for 'asinan' in Medan. This situation is suspected as the main issue that affect consumer choices, especially among those who are not yet acquainted with the brand.

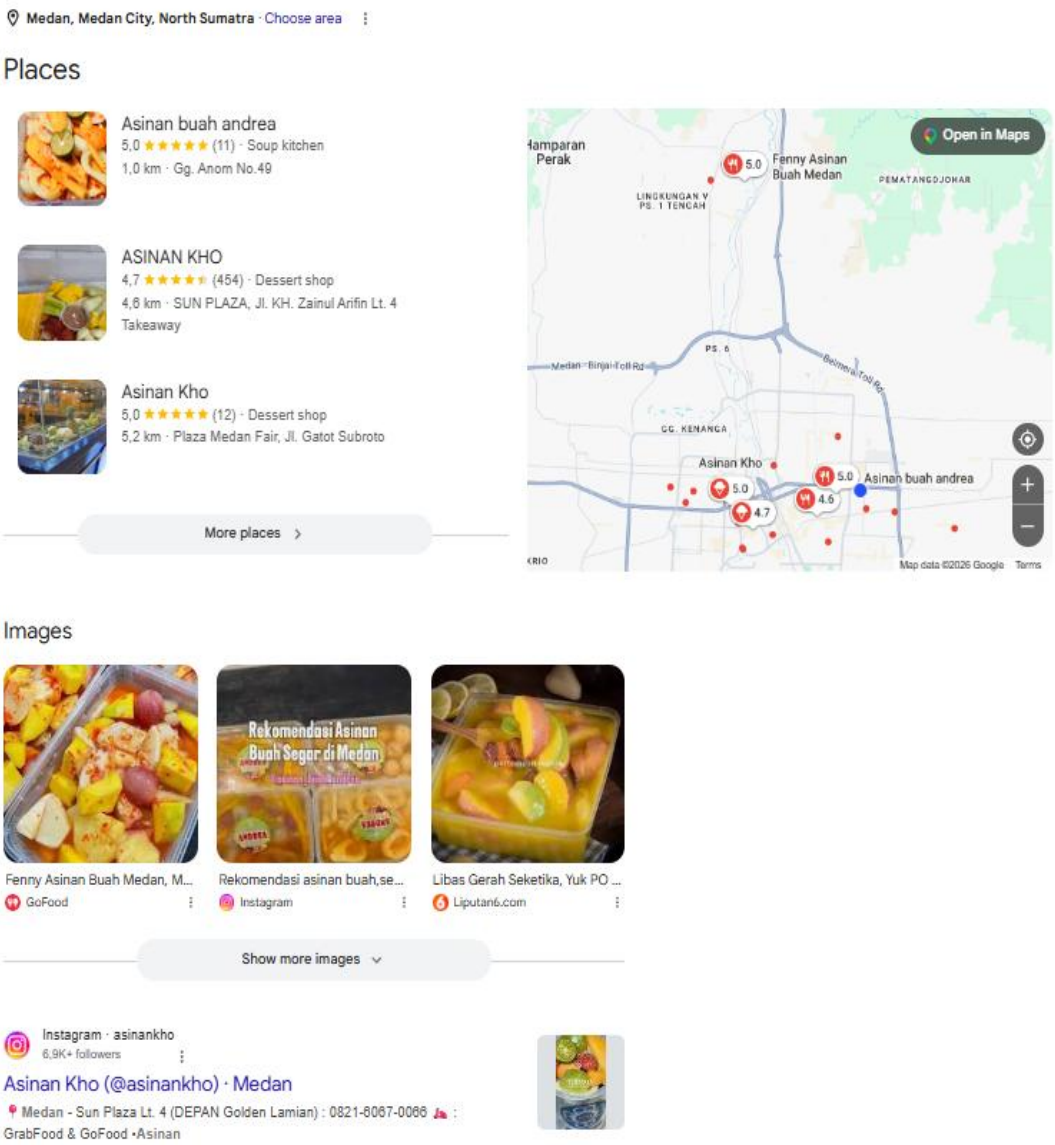


Figure 2. Search results for “asinan” in the city of Medan (source: Google, 2026

Note: The search example suggests limited online visibility for the selected query. Consumer brand awareness is examined separately through the survey.

Despite extensive research on the relationship between content marketing, brand awareness, purchase intention, and purchasing decisions, previous studies have yielded inconsistent results. A study conducted by Manurung et al (2022) found that content marketing influences purchasing decisions, while Mukarromah et al (2022) indicated that purchase intention does not mediate the impact of content marketing on purchasing decisions. In contrast, Ansar et al. (2024), demonstrated that purchase intention does mediate the effects of social media marketing through content and brand awareness on purchasing decisions. These varying outcomes suggest that the mechanisms governing the relationships among these variables are still unclear, highlighting the need for further investigation, especially in the context of culinary SMEs, which possess unique consumer characteristics and digital marketing strategies compared to other sectors.
Asinan Aing Medan has utilized digital media as a marketing channel through platforms such as TikTok, Grab, and Gojek, consistently posting promotional content. However, according to the company’s sales data, there was a decline in sales in 2025 compared to the previous year, despite ongoing digital marketing efforts. It is suspected that content marketing might be the issue for sales decline.

The contribution of this study lies in testing an integrated mediation model that simultaneously examines content marketing and brand awareness as antecedents of purchase decision, with purchase intention as the mediating mechanism, in the context of a local culinary SME in Medan. Unlike previous studies that primarily concentrated on the direct relationships between variables or were restricted to e-commerce platforms and large corporations, this research simultaneously examines the impact of content marketing and brand awareness on purchase decisions, with purchase intention acting as a mediating variable in traditional culinary businesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Decision

A purchase decision concerns the consumer's selection of a product, brand, purchase channel, quantity, timing, and payment method. Purchase intention concerns willingness or plans to buy. A purchase decision represents an individual's intention to buy or utilize a product, whether it is a good or a service, that they believe will fulfill their needs, along with their readiness to accept any associated risks (Jayus et al., 2023). The decision-making process can be intricate, often involving several decisions, each necessitating a choice among two or more alternative actions (Putri & Marlien, 2022). As noted by Nurliyanti et al. (2022) indicators of purchase decisions encompass product selection, brand selection, choice of purchase channel, purchase quantity, timing of purchase, and payment method.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention denotes the degree of willingness or intention among customers to acquire a specific product or service in the future. Purchase intention denotes the likelihood of an individual acquiring a particular product and is a vital component in evaluating consumer behavior (Wardhana, 2024). It represents a type of consumer behavior that arises when external stimuli prompt consumers to make a purchase based on their personal decision-making characteristics and processes (Saputra et al., 2023). As noted by Mukarromah et al. (2022), indicators of purchase intention include transactional interest, referential interest, preference interest, and exploratory interest.

Content

Content encompasses a collection of information presented in various formats, including text, images, photographs, videos, audio, or a combination of these, which can be accessed and distributed through computers or other digital devices such as tablets, laptops, and smartphones (Wahyuti, 2022). The impact of content on consumer purchasing decisions is elucidated by the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). This theory posits that external stimuli, such as digital content or customer reviews, elicit both affective and cognitive responses in individuals, ultimately leading to a purchasing decision (Firliansa et al., 2025). The caliber of content produced by influencers is vital in attracting the attention of Generation Z; content that is engaging and pertinent can significantly boost audience interaction and motivate purchasing behavior (Anggraini & Ahmadi, 2024). As noted by Kumalasanti (2022), indicators of content quality include design, timeliness, reading experience, publication timing, and relevance.

Brand awareness

Brand awareness denotes the degree to which consumers can identify and remember a specific brand when considering a certain product or service category. Brand awareness is a crucial aspect of marketing as it can shape customers' perceptions, interest in purchases, and decision-making processes, while also aiding in the establishment of long-term brand equity.

Brand awareness pertains to the recognition of a brand's presence within its product category, distinguishing it from rival brands in the same sector, thus facilitating easy recognition and recall by consumers (Sitorus et al., 2022). Brand serves as a mechanism to cultivate a specific perception in an individual's mind, achieved through advertising, promotions, or word-of-mouth communication from users of the product (Puspita & Rahmawan, 2021). As noted by Sitorus et al. (2022), indicators of brand awareness, which include unaided recall tests, aided recall tests, and various brand effect assessments.

Conseptual Framework

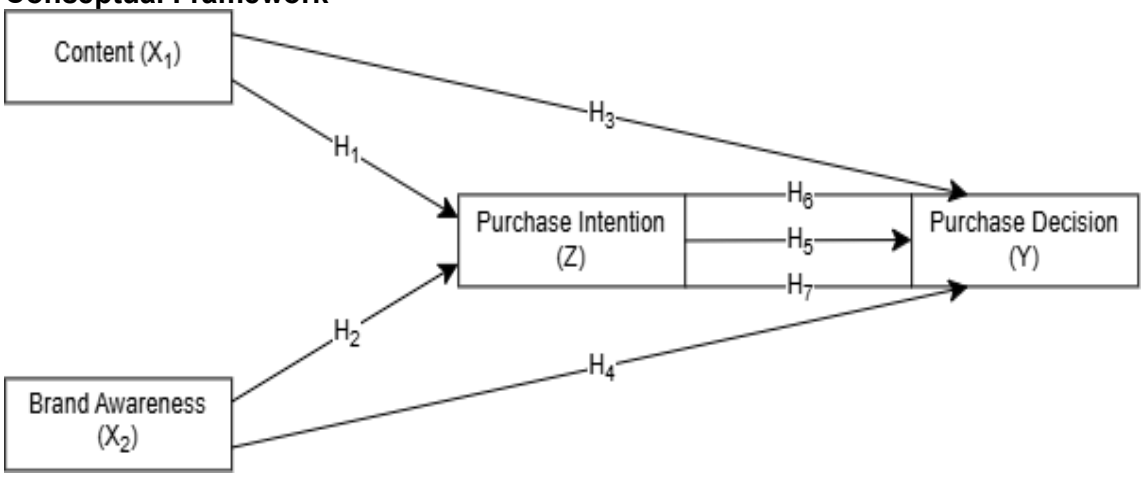


Figure 3. Conseptual Framework (source: observation, 2026)

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out among the patrons of Asinan Aing, situated at Jl. Madong Lubis No. 50, Pandau Hulu I, Medan Kota Subdistrict, Medan City, North Sumatra 20233, from July 2026 to August 2026. A quantitative methodology was utilized in this study, which involved the distribution of questionnaires to customers. As noted by Situmorang & Pane (2024), data collected through a quantitative approach comprises numerical values that are subsequently analyzed using statistical techniques.

The questionnaire distributed included statements pertaining to the research variables, which were assessed on a 1–5 Likert scale which employed to gauge the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups concerning social phenomena or issues from research variables (Amruddin et al., 2022).

The primary data source for this research is derived from the customers of Asinan Aing during the specified study period. The population for this study comprises the customers of Asinan Aing throughout the research duration. The sample size was calculated using the formula suggested by Hair et al. (2022), which recommends a range of 5–10 times the number of indicators in the study. Population of this study are 180 respondents. The sample size was considered adequate for the multiple regression models involving the study variables. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling. As stated by Sahir (2022), purposive sampling is conducted based on specific criteria. The selection criteria for the sample in this study were the customers of Asinan Aing during the research period who had purchased Asinan Aing products.

The analytical procedure involved estimating two multiple linear regression equations. Variable scores were calculated by summing the item responses for each construct. The indirect pathways were evaluated using the product-of-coefficients approach (axb), and their statistical significance was formally tested using the Sobel test based on unstandardized regression coefficients and their corresponding standard errors. Evaluation of content marketing was conducted within a cross-sectional survey framework without prior exposure screening

RESULTS

Instrument Validity and Reliability Assessment

A preliminary pilot examination was undertaken with a sample of 30 participants to evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument employed in the research.

Table 2.
Summary of Validity and Reliability Test Results.

Construct	Number of Items	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Content	10	0,417-0,831	0,842
Brand Awareness	6	0,880-0,960	0,961
Purchase Intention	8	0,645-0,740	0,859
Purchase Decision	12	0,773-0,934	0,968

Source: research results. 2026

The instrument assessment revealed that all items demonstrated corrected item-total correlation coefficients exceeding the established minimum threshold of 0.361, thereby substantiating their validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.842 for Content, 0.961 for Brand Awareness, 0.859 for Purchase Intention, and 0.968 for Purchase Decision collectively demonstrate that all four constructs satisfy the criteria for acceptable internal consistency reliability.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the between of Content, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention and Purchase Decision in Asinan Aing. The results of the multiple linear regression test are presented in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3.
Multiple Linear Regression Test Results (Equation I)

Model		B	Std. Error	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	12.344	1.932		
	Content	0.427	0.040	0.877	1.140
	Brand awareness	0.169	0.068	0.877	1.140
a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention					

Source: research results. 2026

Table 4.
Multiple Linear Regression Test Results (Equation II)

Model		B	Std. Error	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	20.624	2.482		
	Content	0.117	0.059	0.531	1.884
	Brand awareness	0.513	0.080	0.848	1.180
	Purchase intention	0.389	0.087	0.525	1.904
a. Dependent Variable: purchase decision					

Source: research results. 2026

Based on Tables 3 & 4 above, the following linear regression equations were obtained to explain the relationships among the tested variables:
Purchase intention = 12.334 + 0.427 content + 0.169 brand awareness
Purchase decision = 20.624 + 0.117 content + 0.513 brand awareness + 0.389 purchase intention

The regression diagnostic assessment indicates that the residuals satisfy the normality assumption and that heteroscedasticity is not detected in either regression equation. These findings suggest that the residuals are normally distributed and that the error variance is sufficiently constant across observations. Furthermore, the multicollinearity assessment indicates no serious multicollinearity concerns. In Equation I, the tolerance values for Content and Brand Awareness are both 0.877, with VIF values of 1.140. In Equation II, tolerance values range from 0.525 to 0.848, while VIF values range from 1.180 to 1.904. All tolerance values exceed 0.10, and all VIF values are below 5.00.

Simultaneous Significance Test (F-test)
The simultaneous significance test is used to evaluate the significance of the regression model that incorporates Content and Brand Awareness considered jointly in explaining Purchase Intention and Content, Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention considered jointly in explaining Purchase Decision. The test results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.
Results of the F-test

ANOVA[a]			
Model		F	Sig
1	Content and brand awareness towards purchase intention	79.962	0.000
2	Content, brand awareness, purchase intention towards purchase decision	53.550	0.000

Source: research results, 2026

The F-test results for Model 1 show an F-value of 79.962 with a significance value of p < .001. Because the significance value is below the 5% significance level (α = 0.05), the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, content and brand awareness jointly have a significant effect on purchase intention. Similarly, the F-test results for Model 2 show an F-value of 53.550 with a significance value of p < .001. Since the significance value is below the 5% significance level (α = 0.05), the regression model is statistically significant. Thus, content, brand awareness, and purchase intention jointly have a significant effect on purchase decision.

Significance Test for Individual Parameters (t-Test)
The significance test for individual parameters is used to evaluate the significance of the regression model that incorporates Content, Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention considered partially explaining Purchase Decision. The test results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.
Partial t-Test Results for Equation I and II

	Equation I		Equation II	
Model	t	Sig	t	Sig
Content	10.743	<0.001	1.979	<0.049
Brand awareness	2.482	0.014	6.402	<0.001
a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention			a. Dependent Variable: purchase decision	

Source: research results, 2026

Note: t table value = 1.973 (α = 0.05)
H_1: Content positively influences purchase intention.
The content variable demonstrates a t-value of 10.743 and p-value<0.001, it can be concluded that content exerts a statistically significant influence on purchase intention, thereby providing support for H_1.

H_2: Brand awareness positively influences purchase intention
The brand awareness variable exhibits a t-value of 2.482 and p-value = 0.014, it can be concluded that brand awareness exerts a statistically significant influence on purchase intention, thereby providing support for H_2.

H_3: Content positively influences purchase decision.
The content variable is reported to have a t-value of 1.979 and p-value = 0.049, it can be concluded that content influences purchase decisions, thus confirming H_3.

H_4: Brand awareness positively influences purchase decision.
The brand awareness variable has a t-value of 6.402 and p-value<0.001, allowing us to conclude that brand awareness influences the purchase decision, thereby accepting H_4.

H_5: Purchase intention positively influences purchase decision.
The table presented above indicates that the purchase intention variable has a t-value of 4.464 and p-value<0.001, leading to the conclusion that purchase intention has an influence on the purchase decision, thereby accepting H_5.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)
The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to evaluate the proportion of the variation within the regression model

Table 7.
Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Variable relationship	R Square
Content and brand awareness towards purchase intention (Model 1)	0.475
Content, brand awareness, purchase intention towards purchase decision (Model 2)	0.477

Source: research results, 2026

The coefficient of determination for Model 1 (R^2 = 0.475) indicates that content marketing and brand awareness jointly explain 47.5% of the variance in purchase intention, while the remaining 52.5% attributable to other factors outside the model. For Model 2, the R^2 value of 0.477 indicates that content marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention jointly explain 47.7% of the variance in purchase decision, with the remaining 52.3% attributable to other factors outside the model.

Path Analysis

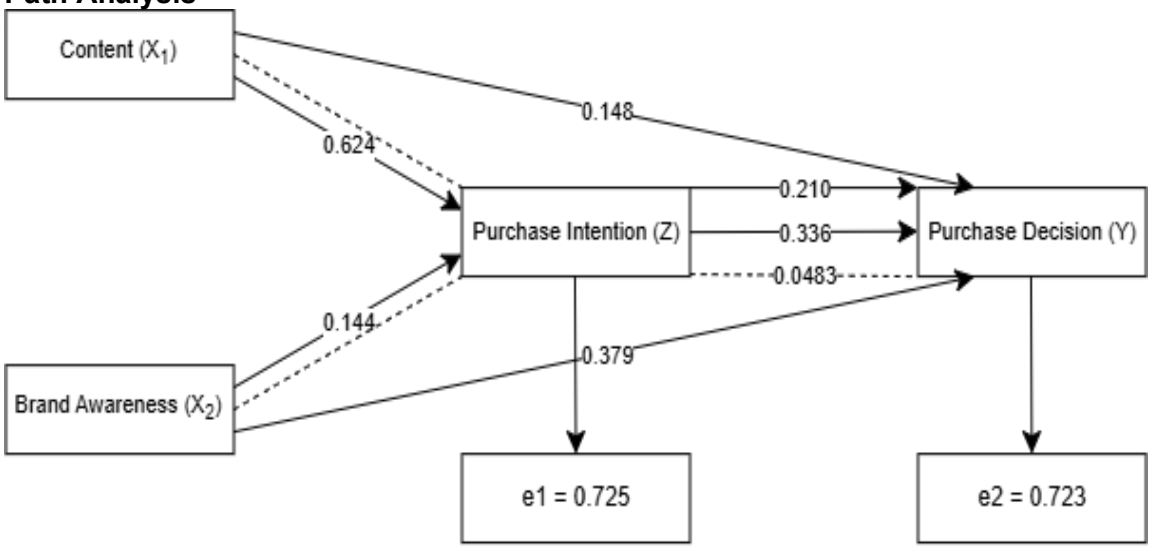


Figure 4. Path Analysis Results

Source: research results, 2026

DISCUSSION

Content positively influences Purchase Intention.
The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 1 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.624. The statistical test produced a t-value of 10.743 with $p < 0.001$. This finding underscores the substantive role that content fulfills in determining consumers' purchase intention. These results align with prior research by Manurung & Rusdianto (2025) who identified a significant relationship between content-oriented marketing initiatives and consumers' purchase intention.

Brand Awareness positively influences Purchase Intention.
The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 2 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.144. The statistical test produced a t-value of 2.482, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.973, with a p-value of 0.014 falling below the significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. These outcomes substantiate the validation of Hypothesis 2, establishing that brand awareness exercises a positive and statistically significant impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, these conclusions align with the prior research findings documented by Rahmi et al. (2021)

Content positively influences Purchase Decision.
The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 3 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.148. The statistical test produced a t-value of 1.979 with $p = 0.049$. These outcomes imply that Hypothesis 3 of this study is accepted, indicating that content exerts a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. These results align with the research conducted by (Erislan, 2025; Manurung et al., 2022; Misbakhudin & Komaryatin, 2023)

Brand Awareness positively influences Purchase Decisions.
The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 4 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.379. The statistical test produced a t-value of 1.979 with $p<0.001$. These results substantiate the acceptance of Hypothesis 4 within this investigation, demonstrating that brand awareness exercises a positive and statistically significant effect on purchasing decisions. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted by (Alfian et al., 2024; Hariyanto & Wijaya, 2022; Rumaidlany et al., 2022)

Purchase Intention positively influences Purchase Decisions.

The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 5 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.336. The statistical test produced a t-value of 4.464 with p<0.001.These findings substantiate the validation of Hypothesis 5, demonstrating that purchase intention exercises a statistically significant positive effect on purchasing behavior. These conclusions are consistent with the empirical evidence presented in prior scholarly investigations by (Ansar et al., 2024; Mukarromah et al., 2022).

Table 8. Mediation Results

Mediation Path	Standardized Indirect Effect	Unstandardized Indirect Effect	Sobel z	p-value	Decision
Content -> PI -> PD	0.210	0.1661	4.124	0.001	Supported
Brand Awareness -> PI -> PD	0.0483	0.0657	2.172	0.030	Supported

Note: Indirect effects are reported in standardized form. Sobel statistics were calculated using the unstandardized regression coefficients and their standard errors.

Purchase Intention serves as a mediator in the relationship between Content and Purchase Decisions.

The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 6 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.210 with $p < 0.001$ (as determined by the Sobel Test). These results provide empirical support for Hypothesis 6, confirming that purchase intention functions as a complementary partial mediation variable in the pathway between content and purchasing decisions. Compelling and substantive content initially generates consumer interest in a product offering. Upon activation of this interest and purchasing desire, consumers demonstrate increased propensity to execute a purchase decision. This finding differs from Mukarromah et al. (2022), who found no mediation through purchase intention in the content marketing relationship. It also differs from Christiana & Lubis (2023), although their study examined social media marketing rather than the same content construct. Differences in constructs, samples, and business settings may help explain these outcomes.

Purchase Intention serves as a mediator in the relationship between Brand Awareness and Purchase Decisions.

The empirical investigation of Hypothesis 7 through path analysis revealed a regression coefficient of 0.0483 with $p = 0.030$ (as determined by the Sobel Test). These results substantiate the acceptance of Hypothesis 7 in the present investigation, establishing that purchase intention functions as a complementary partial mediation between brand awareness and purchase decisions. When consumers exhibit elevated levels of brand awareness, they demonstrate enhanced capacity to identify and retain brand recognition, which can activate their interest and strengthen their propensity to make purchases. Additionally, an increased purchase intention can facilitate consumers in executing their purchasing decisions. These outcomes align with the research performed by Ansar et al. (2024)

CONCLUSION

Content have an effect in influencing purchase intention, suggesting that content that is informative, relevant, engaging, and easily comprehensible can enhance consumers' interest in acquiring Asinan Aing products. Additionally, brand awareness positively and significantly impacts purchase intention, indicating that consumers who are more familiar with and can recognize the Asinan Aing brand are more inclined to develop a purchasing intention. Purchase intention statistically partially mediated the associations of content and brand awareness with purchase decisions, while both direct associations remained positive and significant. The model explains 47.7% of the variance in purchase decision, while the remaining 52.3% variance not explained by the model. The cross-sectional survey of existing customers does not establish temporal order or causal mediation, and

the purposive sample limits generalisation. Consequently, enhancing digital content, boosting brand awareness, and stimulating consumer purchase intention are vital strategies for Asinan Aing Medan to improve purchase decisions and enhance its competitive edge.

RECOMMENDATION

Asinan Aing is advised to continue improving the quality and creativity of its marketing content by providing comprehensive, engaging product information that aligns with the needs of its target consumers. Consistent and informative content across various digital platforms can boost product appeal while driving purchasing decisions. By optimizing these strategies simultaneously, Asinan Aing is expected to increase purchase decisions and strengthen its competitiveness in the market.

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