



How Social Media Marketing Shapes Purchase Intention for Local Culinary Products: Evidence from Madiun's *Pecel* and *Brem* Sellers

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Abstract

Background: Local culinary products such as *pecel* and *brem* from Madiun are cultural assets whose commercialization increasingly depends on digital exposure, yet little is known about how social media marketing shapes purchase-intention formation within this micro-enterprise setting.

Objective: This study explores the mechanisms through which social media marketing practices shape consumer purchase-intention formation toward Madiun's *pecel* and *brem*.

Methods: A qualitative multiple case study was conducted with thirty-two sellers and twenty-four consumers through in-depth interviews, participant observation, digital content archiving, focus group discussions, and documentation. Data were analyzed thematically and credibility was supported through source, method, and investigator triangulation.

Results: Seven content dimensions emerged, led by visual authenticity of the craft process, interactive responsiveness, and origin narrative. Exposure did not operate as a direct causal reported factor of intention; participants described perceived product authenticity, digital trust, and parasocial familiarity as interpretive mechanisms, while perceived spoilage and logistics risks attenuated intention formation.

Conclusion: Sellers displaying unedited production routines and timely responses generated stronger reported intention signals than those relying primarily on polished promotional posts. The study proposes an Authenticity-Trust-Familiarity framework for local culinary micro-enterprises.

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INTRODUCTION

Local culinary products occupy a distinctive position in the economy and cultural identity of Indonesian secondary cities. They are simultaneously everyday commodities, markers of collective memory, and instruments of place branding. Madiun, a mid-sized city in eastern Java, is nationally recognized for two heritage foods of precisely this character. The first is *nasi pecel*, a dish of steamed rice served with blanched vegetables and a spiced peanut sauce, sold by hundreds of small *warung* and household kitchens operating on thin margins and daily turnover. The second

is *brem*, a fermented glutinous-rice confection produced almost exclusively in a cluster of villages on the outskirts of the city and consumed largely as an edible souvenir. Both are embedded in dense social and inter-ethnic networks that have shaped the trading practices of Mataraman cities for generations, so that the everyday routines of selling them constitute social infrastructure as much as commerce (Yulianto et al., 2024). The attributes that consumers attach to such products, including provenance, freshness, and the perceived integrity of the maker, have been shown to drive purchasing behavior more strongly than price alone (Charton-Vachet et al., 2024; Kovacs et al., 2022).

The commercial environment surrounding these products has changed considerably. Micro-enterprises that once relied on physical location, word of mouth, and passing traffic now operate where visibility is interpreted through algorithmic feeds and short-form video. Empirical work across emerging economies indicates that digital transformation improves the marketing performance of small and medium enterprises, particularly when social media is used as an integrative channel rather than a supplementary billboard (M. Amin et al., 2025). Technological readiness, relative advantage, and perceived compatibility determine whether small firms adopt social media marketing at all Ahmed et al. (2025), while relational capability moderates the translation of adoption into business performance (Hafizni et al., 2025). Web-based social networks likewise enable sustainable growth by lowering the cost of market intelligence and customer acquisition (Alkhasoneh et al., 2025). More broadly, social media and digital marketing have become the principal architecture through which consumer behavior is now organized across sectors as varied as retail, sport, and hospitality (Gashi, 2025; Taraku & Taraku, 2025). Yet these findings are drawn largely from firms with formal marketing functions, and their transferability to household-scale culinary producers with limited digital literacy remains an open question.

Purchase intention has long served as the proximate behavioral indicator in food marketing research because it predicts actual buying with reasonable fidelity. Studies of local and traditional food demonstrate that intention is constructed from a bundle of functional, emotional, and symbolic values rather than from utilitarian evaluation alone. Nostalgic emotion attached to traditional preparations has been found to exert a substantial influence on the purchase intentions of younger consumers, who approach heritage food as a vehicle for cultural connection rather than mere sustenance (Chen & Lin, 2024). Consumption value in food tourism shapes both purchase involvement and post-consumption behavior, indicating that intention formation extends well beyond the transaction moment (Stone & Zou, 2025). The manner in which a product is presented at the point of sale matters as well; direct selling and visible on-the-spot preparation have been shown to raise intentions for food souvenirs by making the production process legible to the buyer (Wang et al., 2025). Similar dynamics appear for unfamiliar agricultural products, where consumers rely on cues of origin and cultivation practice to resolve uncertainty (Sgroi et al., 2023).

A parallel body of scholarship examines how social media marketing acts upon these intention-forming processes. Short-video content raises purchase intentions primarily by building trust, which helps explain the relationship between exposure and behavioral response Luo et al. (2025), and content marketing on short-form platforms exerts comparable effects when informational and entertainment value are combined (Wei, 2025). Storytelling, humor, and promotional framing operate through distinct psychological routes Cai et al. (2025), while sustained marketing activity generates brand love and engagement that persist beyond individual campaigns (Sohaib et al., 2025). For influencer-mediated communication, source credibility, perceived expertise, and perceived value jointly determine whether endorsement converts into action (Sharma et al., 2025; Tian et al., 2025). Within the food domain, foodstagramming reshapes culinary production itself Fathy et al. (2025), cinematic techniques alter responses to food video marketing Huang et al. (2025), and food-related advertising influences dietary choice among digitally native cohorts (Nandwani et al., 2025; Sajjad & Pasha, 2025). Social media has also been used as a culinary intervention channel Jurado-Gonzalez et al. (2025), and algorithmic curation is increasingly implicated in unplanned food purchasing (A. Amin, 2025).

Despite this accumulation of evidence, several limitations constrain its usefulness here. Most studies employ survey designs that measure associations between predefined constructs but

cannot recover the interpretive work through which consumers convert a post into an intention. Research on food SMEs has concentrated on halal certification systems and formally structured processors Bahara et al. (2025) or on agricultural producers viewed through supply chain digitalization (Relawati et al., 2025). Indonesian studies have addressed craft sectors such as batik rather than perishable culinary goods sold by informal micro-enterprises, and where local products are examined directly the focus falls on regulated categories such as pharmaceuticals or on rural tourism resilience (Agustinah et al., 2025; Zhong et al., 2025). The case of a perishable, geographically bounded, culturally loaded food product marketed by owner-operators in a secondary city remains unaddressed, and the mechanisms linking social media practice to purchase intention in that context remain unspecified (Al-Assaf et al., 2025).

The novelty of this study and its position relative to the state of the art rest on three interlocking contributions. The first is contextual: whereas prior research has concentrated on branded consumer goods, tourism destinations, and formally organized enterprises in metropolitan settings, this study examines two heritage culinary products with radically different perishability profiles, *pecel* as a same-day prepared dish and *brem* as a shelf-stable souvenir, produced by micro-enterprises in a single Indonesian secondary city. This paired design permits comparison of how social media marketing operates when the product can and cannot travel. The second is methodological: the dominant literature is quantitative and variance-oriented, testing whether constructs covary but leaving the interpretive pathway opaque. By combining in-depth interviews, participant observation, systematic archiving of the sellers' own digital content, and focus group discussions, this study reconstructs the meaning-making process by which exposure becomes intention from the perspectives of both producer and buyer. The third is conceptual: rather than treating social media marketing as a monolithic stimulus, the study disaggregates it into content dimensions grounded in the sellers' own practice and identifies three interpretive mechanisms, namely perceived product authenticity, digital trust, and parasocial familiarity, together with one attenuating condition in the form of perceived logistic and spoilage risk. These are synthesized into an Authenticity-Trust-Familiarity framework that extends existing trust-mediation accounts Luo et al., (2025) and Larfi et al. (2025) by specifying where authenticity claims originate, how they are verified by consumers, and under what conditions they fail to convert into intention. It thereby connects work on influencer credibility and market-shaping narratives Cayla et al. (2025) and Zhang and Bryson, (2025) to a class of enterprise largely invisible in that literature.

Proceeding from the identified gaps, the study has four objectives: (i) describe the social media marketing practices used by *pecel* and *brem* micro-enterprises; (ii) identify the content dimensions consumers report using when forming purchase intentions; (iii) explain the interpretive roles of perceived authenticity, digital trust, parasocial familiarity, and logistics/spoilage risk; and (iv) develop a contextually grounded framework and practical recommendations for heritage-food micro-enterprises and local support institutions.

METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative design grounded in the interpretive paradigm, on the premise that purchase intention toward heritage food is not a fixed attribute waiting to be measured but a meaning constructed by consumers as they interpret what they see, read, and experience in digital spaces. The interpretive stance is appropriate because the research question concerns how and why social media marketing influences intention rather than how much, and because the sellers under study operate without formal marketing documentation, so their practices can only be recovered through direct engagement. A multiple case study strategy was selected, treating each of the two product categories as a bounded case and each participating enterprise as an embedded unit of analysis. This structure allows within-case depth and cross-case comparison between a perishable daily-consumption product and a shelf-stable souvenir product, which is central to the study's contribution.

The research was conducted in Madiun City and the adjacent *brem*-producing villages of Kaliabu and Bancong in Madiun Regency, East Java, over a period of eight months from October 2025 to May 2026. Two participant groups were recruited through purposive sampling with a maximum variation logic. The seller group comprised thirty-two owner-operators, sixteen selling

nasi *pecel* and sixteen producing *brem*, selected against four criteria: operating continuously for at least three years, maintaining at least one active social media account with posting activity in the preceding ninety days, deriving the majority of household income from the enterprise, and consenting to observation of both offline and digital operations. The consumer group comprised twenty-four buyers who had purchased at least one of the two products within the preceding six months and had encountered the product through a social media channel prior to purchase, stratified across age cohorts and across resident and visitor status to capture both routine and souvenir purchasing logics.

Five data collection techniques were combined to enable triangulation. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with all fifty-six participants, lasting between forty-five and ninety minutes, using separate protocols for sellers and consumers and conducted in Indonesian and Javanese according to participant preference. Participant observation was carried out at the premises of twelve sellers for a cumulative total of one hundred and forty hours, documenting production routines, customer interaction, and the actual moments in which content was photographed, captioned, and uploaded. Digital content archiving captured every public post, caption, comment thread, and reply published by the thirty-two enterprises over a six-month window, producing a corpus of two thousand one hundred and eighty-seven content items whose engagement metrics were recorded systematically. Four focus group discussions were then convened, two with sellers and two with consumers, each comprising six to eight participants, to test emerging interpretations against collective deliberation. Interviews conducted in Indonesian or Javanese were coded with reference to the original-language wording; quotations selected for English reporting were translated during manuscript preparation with attention to preserving the participants' intended meaning.

Table 1

Data collection techniques and corpus

Technique	Participants or corpus	Volume	Period or duration
In-depth interview	32 sellers and 24 consumers	56 sessions	45-90 minutes each
Participant observation	12 seller premises	140 hours	October 2025 - March 2026
Digital content archiving	32 business accounts	2,187 content items	Six-month window
Focus group discussion	2 seller groups, 2 consumer groups	4 sessions	6-8 participants each
Documentation	Permits, order records, packaging	38 documents	Collected throughout

Data analysis followed a thematic procedure implemented in three iterative cycles. The first cycle applied open coding to interview transcripts, field notes, and archived content, generating an initial inventory of descriptive codes anchored in participants' own vocabulary. The second cycle grouped these into axial categories by identifying relationships of condition, action, and consequence, which produced the content dimensions and the candidate mechanisms. The third cycle performed selective coding around the core category of intention formation, integrating the categories into the framework reported in the following section. Analysis proceeded concurrently with collection so that emerging categories could be pursued in subsequent interviews. Thematic saturation was monitored formally after each block of four interviews using the following index, in which the proportion of newly generated codes relative to the cumulative code inventory is tracked until it falls below the conventional threshold of five per cent:

$$S_t = 1 - \frac{C_{new(t)}}{C_{total(t-1)}} \times 100\%$$

Saturation was reached at the forty-eighth interview, at which point the index fell to 3.1 per cent, and the remaining eight interviews were conducted to confirm stability rather than to

extend the code inventory. To guard against idiosyncratic interpretation, a second coder independently coded a randomly selected twenty per cent of the corpus, and inter-coder agreement was computed as follows, where the observed proportion of agreement is corrected for the agreement expected by chance:

$$K = \frac{p_o - p_e}{1 - p_e}$$

The resulting coefficient of 0.84 indicates substantial agreement and exceeds the accepted threshold for qualitative coding reliability. Disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached, and the code definitions were revised accordingly. For the archived digital corpus, a supplementary descriptive measure was computed to characterize the relative performance of content types within each account, expressed as the aggregate of likes, comments, shares, and saves for a given item relative to the follower base of the publishing account:

$$ER_i = \frac{L_i + M_i + Sh_i + Sv_i}{F_i} \times 100\%$$

This measure was not used to make inferential claims but to identify high-performing and low-performing content for purposive discussion during interviews and focus groups, thereby anchoring participant reflection in concrete artefacts rather than in generalized recollection. Trustworthiness was established according to the four conventional criteria. Credibility was pursued through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, source triangulation across sellers, consumers, and archived content, method triangulation across interviews, observation, archiving, and group discussion, and member checking in which summarized interpretations were returned to twenty participants for confirmation. Transferability was supported by thick description of the setting, the products, and the enterprise structures. Dependability was addressed through an audit trail documenting every analytic decision, and confirmability through reflexive memoing in which the researcher's own position as a resident of the region was interrogated for its effect on interpretation. All participants provided informed consent, were assigned pseudonymous codes, and retained the right to withdraw; no identifying business names, account handles, or images are reproduced in this report. Illustrative quotations are treated as anonymized qualitative evidence; where the manuscript does not preserve a participant code beside a quotation, no code is reconstructed after the fact because doing so would create an unsupported identifier.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Profile of the Participating Enterprises

The thirty-two participating enterprises share the structural features that define household-scale culinary production in the region, but they differ systematically along the dimensions that matter for digital marketing. Table 2 summarizes the profile of the seller group across operating history, workforce composition, monthly turnover, educational attainment of the person responsible for digital content, and the distribution channel that generates the largest share of revenue.

Table 2

Profile of Participating Culinary Micro-Enterprises.

Characteristic	Category	Pecel sellers (n = 16)	Brem producers (n = 16)
Length of operation	3-9 years	5	4
	10-20 years	7	6
	More than 20 years	4	6
Number of workers	1-2 persons (family only)	10	3
	3-5 persons	5	8
	More than 5 persons	1	5
Monthly turnover	Below IDR 15 million	9	4

Characteristic	Category	<i>Pecel</i> sellers (n = 16)	<i>Brem</i> producers (n = 16)
Education of content manager	IDR 15-40 million	6	7
	Above IDR 40 million	1	5
	Junior/senior high school	9	7
Content manager role	Diploma / bachelor degree	7	9
	Owner or spouse	5	10
Dominant revenue channel	Child of owner	11	6
	Walk-in / on-site	14	5
Years of social media use	Messaging app or marketplace	2	11
	Less than 3 years	8	4
	3 years or more	8	12

Two contrasts are analytically consequential. The first concerns who produces the content. Among *pecel* sellers, the person responsible for social media is in eleven of sixteen cases a son or daughter of the owner rather than the owner personally, whereas among *brem* producers the responsibility sits with the owner or a spouse in ten of sixteen cases. This difference reflects both the age profile of the operators and the perceived seriousness of the channel; *brem* producers, whose product is bought as a gift and shipped beyond the city, treat digital presence as a core business function, while *pecel* sellers more often describe it as something the younger generation handles. The second contrast concerns revenue dependence. *Pecel* enterprises derive between seventy and ninety per cent of revenue from walk-in customers, so digital activity functions as a supplement to physical visibility. *Brem* producers, by contrast, report that between forty and sixty-five per cent of orders now originate from messaging applications and marketplace listings, which makes the digital channel structurally necessary rather than optional. This asymmetry conditions every finding that follows and echoes evidence that the marginal value of social media adoption depends on how far the firm's market extends beyond its immediate locality (Alkhasoneh et al., 2025; Amin et al., 2025).

Social Media Adoption and Content Production Routines

Platform adoption across the two groups is uneven and reveals a pragmatic rather than strategic logic of selection. Figure 1 presents the distribution of active platform use among the thirty-two enterprises.

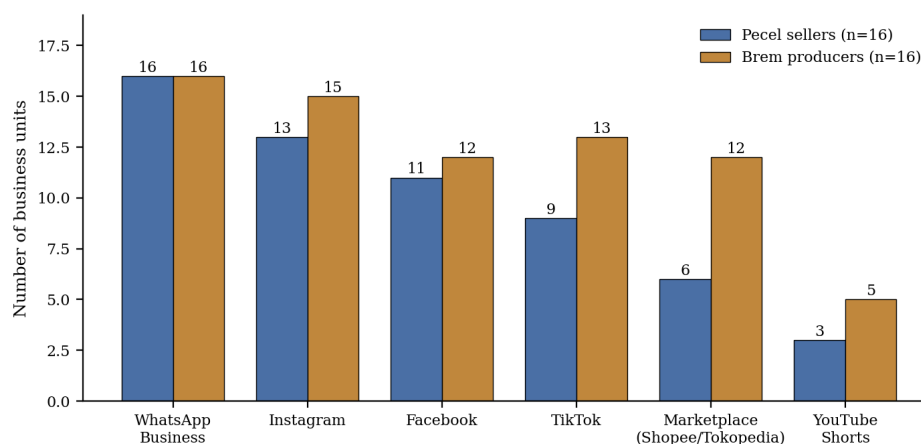


Figure 1. Active Social Media Platform Use among Participating Enterprises.

WhatsApp Business is universal, functioning less as a marketing channel than as an order desk and a repository of the broadcast list. Instagram is close to universal among *brem* producers

and slightly less prevalent among *pecel* sellers. The most pronounced divergence appears on TikTok and on marketplace platforms, where *brem* producers substantially outpace *pecel* sellers, a pattern participants explained entirely in terms of shipping feasibility. A *brem* producer stated the logic plainly: if the buyer is in Surabaya or Jakarta the order can be packed and sent the same afternoon, so there is a reason to be visible to people who will never visit Madiun. A *pecel* seller offered the inverse reasoning, observing that attracting an audience that cannot reach the stall before the sauce loses its freshness produces frustration rather than sales.

Content production routines were similarly pragmatic. Only seven of the thirty-two enterprises maintained anything resembling a content calendar, and in all seven cases this consisted of a handwritten weekly plan rather than a digital scheduling tool. Posting frequency ranged from twice weekly to five times daily, with the highest frequency concentrated among *brem* producers using short-form video. Observation revealed that the great majority of content was produced during the production process itself rather than in a separate creative session, with the operator pausing to record a short clip of grinding, steaming, fermenting, or plating before resuming work. This incidental mode of production has an important consequence: it yields content that is unpolished, poorly lit, and often shot vertically with ambient noise, and yet, as the following subsections demonstrate, precisely these qualities are read by consumers as evidence of authenticity. The finding aligns with evidence that visible production process raises intention for food souvenirs Wang et al. (2025), and it qualifies research emphasizing the persuasive power of cinematic production technique Huang et al. (2025) by showing that in the heritage food context the persuasive value of technical polish is contingent and may even be negative.

Content Dimensions Shaping Purchase Intention

Coding of the interview and focus group corpus generated seven content dimensions that consumers recognized and acted upon. The chart below reports the frequency of coded references to each dimension across the full corpus of nine hundred and eighty-nine coded segments.

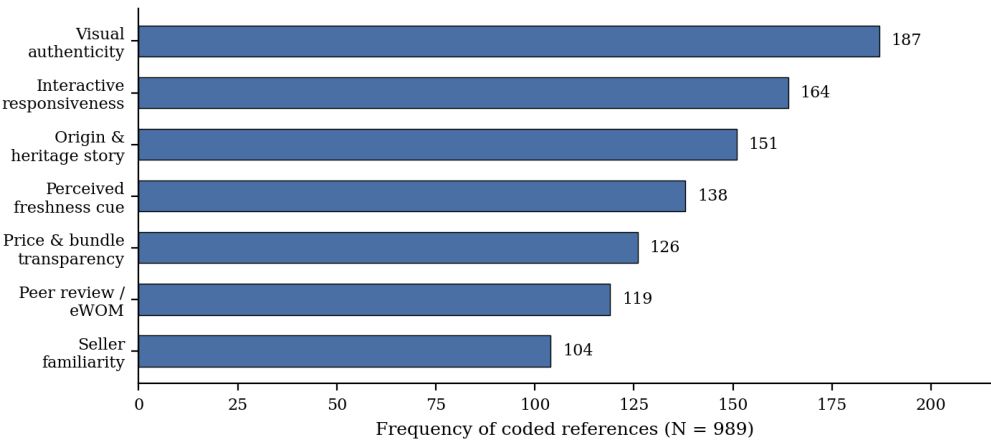


Figure 2. Frequency of Coded References Across Key Consumer Perception Themes

The relative ordering is stable across both product categories and across consumer age cohorts, although the intensity varies. The table below sets out each dimension with its constituent sub-codes, the number of participants who raised it, and an indicative formulation drawn from the corpus.

Table 3
Content dimensions, constituent sub-codes, sources, and indicative formulations

Content dimension	Constituent sub-codes	Sources	Indicative formulation
Visual authenticity of the craft process	Grinding and pounding shown on camera; hands of the maker in frame; unedited lighting; visible imperfection; production area rather than styled table	48	<i>It is not about a nice photograph; it is about seeing that nothing is hidden</i>

Content dimension	Constituent sub-codes	Sources	Indicative formulation
Interactive responsiveness	Reply latency; owner replying personally; willingness to answer trivial questions; follow-up after delivery	44	<i>If she answers within minutes, I already trust the rest of the transaction</i>
Origin and heritage narrative	Village of origin; length of fermentation; recipe inherited from parents; length of operation	41	<i>The story is part of what I am giving to my relatives</i>
Perceived freshness cues	Steam visible in frame; date stated in caption; stock photographed on the same morning; queue length	37	<i>I want proof that it was made today, not last week</i>
Price and bundle transparency	Price stated in the caption; shipping cost declared upfront; hamper composition itemized	33	<i>If I have to ask the price, I assume it changes depending on who asks</i>
Peer review and electronic word of mouth	Comment section testimony; reposted customer photographs; ratings on marketplace listings	31	<i>I read the comments before I read the caption</i>
Seller familiarity	Recognizing the face or voice; following for months before ordering; sense of knowing the family	27	<i>After watching her every morning, I felt I was ordering from a neighbor</i>

Visual authenticity of the craft process dominates the corpus. Consumers described in detail the specific visual signals they treated as evidence: the sight of peanuts being ground rather than poured from a packet, the visible steam rising from freshly blanched vegetables, the hands of the maker appearing in frame, the imperfect edges of a *brem* block cut by hand. One consumer articulated the inference explicitly, explaining that anyone can photograph a finished plate, but showing the grinding stone means there is nothing to hide. This dimension is not aesthetic in the conventional sense; participants consistently rated technically inferior images higher when those images displayed process, and several expressed active suspicion toward content that appeared professionally produced. A recurring formulation held that when the photograph looks like an advertisement, the food probably comes from a factory. This finding extends the literature on food-related visual communication by distinguishing between production quality and evidentiary quality, a distinction that survey instruments measuring content attractiveness are structurally unable to detect (Nandwani et al., 2025; Sajjad & Pasha, 2025).

Interactive responsiveness ranks second and was described in strikingly concrete terms. Consumers reported that the interval between sending an enquiry and receiving a reply functioned as their primary proxy for the reliability of the seller, and several stated that a delay beyond a few hours led them to abandon the purchase and search elsewhere. Cross-referencing interview accounts with the archived corpus showed that the seven enterprises with median reply times under one hour were also those whose consumers described the strongest and most immediate intention to purchase. Responsiveness was valued not only for its instrumental function of resolving questions about price, availability, and shipping, but for what it was taken to signal about the seller's regard for the buyer. A consumer who had ordered *brem* for a family event explained that being answered quickly by the owner herself, rather than by an assistant reading from a script, made the transaction feel like dealing with a person rather than a shop. This mechanism corresponds closely to the credibility signals identified in service contexts Sarac et al. (2025) and to trust-mediation findings in short-video commerce Luo et al. (2025), while grounding them in an observable behavioral indicator that micro-enterprises can control without financial investment.

The origin and heritage narrative dimension operates differently for the two products. For *brem*, narratives concerning the village of origin, the fermentation period, and the transmission of the recipe across generations were consistently invoked by consumers as reasons for preferring

one producer over another; the product's status as a gift makes its story part of what is given. For *pecel*, heritage narratives were valued but were treated as secondary to freshness cues, since the buyer expects to consume the dish within minutes and evaluates it against direct sensory memory. This divergence supports research showing that provenance and terroir claims function as authenticity infrastructure for products that travel Charton-Vachet et al. (2024) and Kovacs et al. (2022) refines it by demonstrating that the same claims lose salience when the consumption occasion is immediate and local. It also resonates with evidence that nostalgic emotion carries particular weight for younger consumers approaching traditional food (Chen & Lin, 2024) ; in the present corpus, participants under thirty were markedly more likely than older participants to cite heritage narrative as a reason for purchase, having less direct familial memory of the product to draw upon.

The four remaining dimensions carried lower but non-trivial weight. Perceived freshness cues, comprising visible steam, the date stamp on a caption, and the appearance of unsold stock at closing time, were decisive for *pecel* and largely irrelevant for *brem*, whose fermentation makes the product improve rather than degrade during its first weeks. Price and bundle transparency mattered chiefly for gift purchases, where buyers assembling multi-item hampers required predictable arithmetic before committing. Peer review and electronic word of mouth functioned as a verification layer rather than a discovery layer; participants described searching the comment section of a seller's post for evidence from previous buyers before ordering, a practice consistent with findings that documented experiences shared by earlier consumers shape the intentions of later ones Tao et al. (2025) and that electronic word of mouth carries independent explanatory weight alongside promotional content (Mohanani & Shekhar, 2025). Seller familiarity, the weakest of the seven dimensions in aggregate, was nonetheless the strongest single reported factor among repeat buyers, indicating that its influence is conditional on prior transaction history. Generational patterning was evident throughout: participants in the youngest cohort relied more heavily on video, on creator-style presentation, and on social proof, in line with evidence on the digitally mediated buying behavior of younger consumers Rosnerova et al., (2025) Fornazarić & Gorenc (2025), while older participants weighted direct interaction with the seller more highly. Social influence and value orientation also surfaced as reasons for choosing local over industrially produced alternatives, echoing findings on the drivers of sustainable food consumption (Wu & Yu, 2025).

The Mechanism of Intention Formation

The central analytical finding of this study is that social media marketing does not act upon purchase intention directly. Across the corpus, no participant described a pathway in which seeing a post produced an intention to buy without an intervening act of interpretation. Instead, three mechanisms consistently mediate the relationship, and one condition attenuates it. The figure below presents the resulting framework.

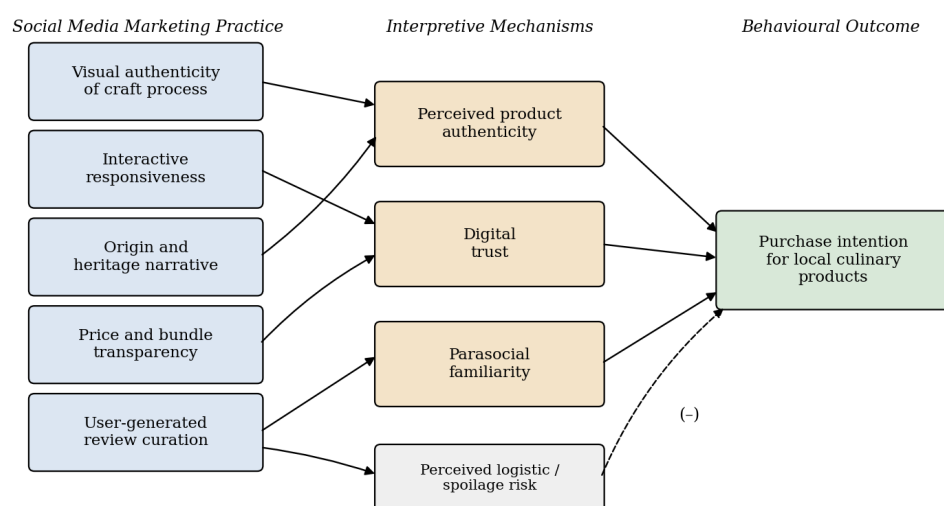


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework Linking Social Media Marketing Practices, Interpretive

Mechanisms, and Purchase Intention

Perceived product authenticity is the first mechanism and the most frequently invoked. Content dimensions relating to craft process and origin narrative are converted into a judgement about whether the product is what it claims to be, which in the heritage food context means whether it was made in the traditional manner by the party claiming to have made it. Authenticity in this sense is inferential rather than certified; consumers have no access to verification and therefore reason from visual evidence to conclusions about production. The second mechanism is digital trust, understood as confidence that the transaction will proceed as represented, that the product will arrive in the described condition, and that the seller will respond if it does not. Trust is built primarily through interactive responsiveness and price transparency, and it is the mechanism through which authenticity becomes actionable. Several consumers described believing that a product was genuine yet declining to order because they were uncertain the seller would handle a problem. The third mechanism is parasocial familiarity, which accumulates through repeated exposure to the same face, voice, and setting until the consumer experiences a sense of acquaintance with the seller. Participants who followed an account for several months without purchasing described eventually buying because it felt like supporting someone they knew. This mechanism is well documented in influencer research Tian et al. (2025) and Ali et al. (2025) but is shown here to operate for ordinary micro-entrepreneurs with audiences numbering in the hundreds rather than the millions, which suggests that parasocial effects depend on consistency of self-presentation rather than on audience scale.

The attenuating condition is perceived logistic and spoilage risk, and it explains most of the observed cases in which strong authenticity and trust judgements failed to produce purchase. For *pecel* this risk is absolute, since the product cannot be shipped in any form that preserves what makes it desirable; consumers outside the city therefore convert their intention into a plan for a future visit rather than a purchase. For *brem* the risk is moderate and manageable, concerning packaging integrity and transit time rather than spoilage as such. This asymmetry is the principal source of divergence between the two cases and constitutes a boundary condition that the existing literature, developed largely around durable or digital goods, has not had occasion to specify.

To characterize the relative weight of the content dimensions within the corpus, a composite index was computed for each dimension as the mean of its normalized reference frequency weighted by the proportion of participants who identified it as decisive for their own purchase decision:

$$PI_{index} = \frac{1}{\bar{n}} \sum_{j=1}^n \left(w_j \cdot \frac{f_{ij}}{f_{max}} \right)$$

Applying this index yields values of 0.87 for visual authenticity of the craft process, 0.79 for interactive responsiveness, 0.71 for origin and heritage narrative, 0.64 for perceived freshness cues, 0.58 for price and bundle transparency, 0.54 for peer review and electronic word of mouth, and 0.47 for seller familiarity. The index is descriptive and specific to this corpus; it is reported to make the relative salience of the dimensions transparent rather than to support generalization. Its ordering nonetheless corresponds closely with the pathway structure of the framework, in that the two dimensions feeding perceived authenticity and digital trust carry the highest weights.

Cross-case comparison between the two product categories is summarized in the table below, which reports how each element of the framework manifests differently for *pecel* and for *brem*.

Table 4
Comparative Framework of Social Media Marketing Dynamics for Pecel and Brem

Framework element	<i>Pecel</i> (prepared dish)	<i>Brem</i> (souvenir confection)
Product mobility	Non-shippable; viable only within same-day consumption radius	Shippable nationally; shelf life of several months
Dominant platform logic	Local reach; WhatsApp and Instagram used to confirm opening hours and daily menu	National reach; TikTok and marketplace listings used to acquire distant buyers

Framework element	<i>Pecel</i> (prepared dish)	<i>Brem</i> (souvenir confection)
Most salient content dimension	Visual freshness cue combined with craft process	Craft process combined with origin and heritage narrative
Role of heritage narrative	Secondary; consumers evaluate against immediate sensory memory	Primary; the story forms part of the gift being transferred
Dominant mechanism	Perceived authenticity reinforced by parasocial familiarity among residents	Digital trust, because the transaction precedes any physical contact
Attenuating condition	Severe; distant intention is deferred into a future visit rather than a purchase	Moderate; concerns packaging integrity and transit time only
Observed conversion pattern	Engagement without revenue when audience is non-local	Engagement converts to orders across the national audience
Most actionable practice	Same-morning posting of prepared stock with stated time	Reply latency below one hour with itemised shipping cost

Discussion

The findings of this study both confirm and qualify the established literature. The centrality of trust as a mediating mechanism corroborates evidence from short-video commerce that exposure influences intention through trust rather than directly Luo et al. (2025) and from social commerce research showing that information sharing affects intention through relationship quality while perceived risk operates in the opposite direction (Larfi et al., 2025). The present study specifies the content antecedents of that trust in a setting where the seller has no brand equity, no certification, and no advertising budget, and it identifies responsiveness latency as an observable and controllable antecedent. The salience of parasocial familiarity extends influencer research to micro-scale accounts, indicating that the mechanism is not a function of celebrity but of consistent personal presence (Ali et al. 2025; Sharma et al., 2025; Tian et al., 2025).

The most substantial departure from prior work concerns production quality. A significant strand of research demonstrates that sophisticated content technique enhances marketing outcomes, whether through cinematic manipulation of food video Huang et al. (2025), multimodal optimization of influencer content Zhang and Bryson (2025), or interface design that manages consumer impatience (Yang et al., 2025). In the present context the relationship is non-monotonic. Content that displayed technical polish beyond a moderate threshold was interpreted as evidence of industrial production and reduced rather than enhanced intention. This suggests that the persuasive function of production quality is category-dependent, and that for products whose value proposition rests on artisanal provenance, visible imperfection carries evidentiary weight. The implication for practice runs directly counter to the standard advice given in digital marketing training programs, which typically emphasizes image quality, consistent visual identity, and professional editing.

The results also speak to the literature on social media marketing and SME performance. Studies establishing that digital transformation improves marketing performance M. Amin et al. (2025), that technological determinants condition adoption Ahmed et al. (2025), and that relational capability mediates the performance effect Hafizni et al. (2025) are supported in general direction. The present findings add that for micro-enterprises the binding constraint is rarely adoption itself, since all thirty-two enterprises had already adopted at least two platforms, but rather the alignment between platform affordance and product logistics. *Pecel* sellers who invested effort in platforms optimized for national reach obtained engagement without revenue, a pattern of misalignment that adoption-focused frameworks do not capture. This observation is consistent with the emphasis on business communication strategy as an internal sustainability mechanism in small firms Kalogiannidis et al. (2025), with evidence on how social media branding operates for place-bound offerings in emerging economies Alaflak et al. (2025), and with findings on how information and communication technologies contribute to the resilience of place-bound rural economies (Zhong et al., 2025).

Finally, the study contributes to the understanding of local food marketing. Research on

local food purchasing has identified provenance, quality attributes, and motivational orientation as determinants of choice Kovacs et al. (2022) and Sgroi et al. (2023), while work on consumption value has connected these to involvement and post-purchase behavior (Stone & Zou, 2025). The framework developed here shows how these determinants are transmitted through digital channels when the transmitting party is the producer rather than a retailer or a destination marketing organization. It also indicates that the value of narrative is conditional on the mobility of the product, a moderating relationship that has not previously been articulated and that has direct implications for how heritage food clusters allocate promotional effort. Broader work on how influencer narratives reconfigure markets Cayla et al. (2025) and how live-streaming intermediaries restructure regional economic relationships Zhang and Bryson (2025) suggests that the mechanisms identified here may scale, but the present evidence supports claims only within the bounded context studied.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explain how social media marketing shapes purchase intention for local culinary products, using the *pecel* sellers and *brem* producers of Madiun as paired cases. The evidence gathered from thirty-two sellers, twenty-four consumers, one hundred and forty hours of observation, and a six-month archive of digital content supports four principal conclusions. First, social media marketing practice among these enterprises is pragmatic and incidental rather than strategic, with content produced during the work process itself and platform selection driven by whether the product can be shipped rather than by audience analysis. Second, consumers form purchase intentions based on seven content dimensions, of which visual evidence of the craft process and interactive responsiveness carry the greatest weight, and technical production quality carries none and attenuating condition beyond a moderate threshold. Third, the relationship between marketing exposure and intention is not direct but is interpreted through perceived product authenticity, digital trust, and parasocial familiarity, and is attenuated by perceived logistic and spoilage risk, which for non-shippable products is severe enough to sever the pathway entirely. Fourth, the two product categories diverge systematically along the mobility dimension, so that heritage narrative and national-reach platforms generate returns for *brem* while producing engagement without revenue for *pecel*.

The theoretical contribution lies in the Authenticity-Trust-Familiarity framework, which specifies the interpretive pathway between social media content and purchase intention for heritage food produced by micro-enterprises, and which identifies product mobility as a boundary condition determining which content dimensions repay investment. Practically, the findings suggest that capacity-building programs for heritage culinary producers should reverse two elements of conventional digital marketing training. Rather than teaching image polish, such programs should teach producers to document process; rather than encouraging presence on every available platform, they should help producers match platform reach to the geographic range within which their product remains viable. The single highest-return intervention identified in this study requires no financial investment at all, consisting simply of reducing the interval between customer enquiry and reply.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The study is bounded to one city and two products, and its findings are offered as analytically rather than statistically generalizable. Purchase intention was reconstructed from participant accounts rather than observed through to completed transactions, so the intention-behavior gap remains unexamined. The archived content corpus covers six months and cannot capture seasonal variation associated with holiday gifting cycles, which are consequential for *brem*. Future research could test the proposed framework quantitatively across a larger sample of heritage food clusters, extend the design longitudinally to trace intention through to purchase and repurchase, and examine whether the negative relationship between production polish and perceived authenticity holds across other categories of artisanal product.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The research article entitled *The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention of Local Culinary Products: Evidence from Madiun's Pecel and Brem Sellers* is an individual work by Muhammad Taali of Politeknik Negeri Madiun, covering all stages of the research from conceptualization and formulation of the research problem, design of the qualitative multiple case study methodology, development of the interview and observation protocols, fieldwork and data collection through interviews, participant observation, digital content archiving and focus group discussions, thematic analysis and construction of the Authenticity-Trust-Familiarity framework, through to manuscript writing, editing, visualization of results, and project administration. The author is fully responsible for data management and integrity, declares that the research was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards including informed consent and participant anonymity, and declares no conflict of interest.

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