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Revisiting Food Purchasing Intention Determinants: Strategic Roles of Social Media Promotion and Halal Labelling

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ABSTRACT

Driven by the fierce rivalry within the digital-age culinary MSME sector, this research addresses the conflicting empirical evidence surrounding how digital marketing, halal certification, and e-WOM shape purchasing interest. The research gap lies in the divergent results of prior studies and the limited empirical models integrating social media promotion, halal labelling, and e-WOM within a unified analytical framework in a religiosity-based local market context. This study aims to examine the effects of social media promotion, halal labelling, and e-WOM on consumer purchasing intention in culinary SMEs. A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression to test both partial and simultaneous effects. Statistical evaluations demonstrate that while online promotion and halal tags notably drive purchasing decisions, peer-to-peer digital reviews (e-WOM) fail to show a meaningful partial impact. Simultaneously, the three variables significantly affect purchasing intention. The novelty of this study lies in developing an integrative model that combines digital communication dimensions and religious value-based trust attributes within a single empirical framework at the SME level. Theoretically, the study enriches digital and halal marketing literature, while managerially, it highlights the importance of optimizing promotional content and ensuring halal certification. Future research is recommended to adopt longitudinal designs and incorporate mediating variables such as trust and perceived risk to further refine the analytical model.

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Introduction

The pivotal role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is widely recognized globally and within Indonesia. By accounting for approximately 90% of overall business operations and injecting more than half into the economic value, this sector serves as a fundamental pillar for economic resilience (Putri 2023). This success is partly driven by the food SME sector, which has therefore attracted considerable attention (Al-karkhi 2024). Data reported by Databoks Katadata reveal that the food sector represents the most prevalent business field among SMEs, accounting for 42.3% according to a survey by Alvira Research Center (Santika 2023).

A comparable trend is observable locally in Banten Province, where culinary enterprises dominate the MSME landscape, comprising roughly 60% of the total, or about 97,092 active businesses (Rienaldhi 2023). Interestingly, despite its status as the provincial capital, Serang City records the smallest concentration of these food ventures compared to other surrounding districts, registering a mere 5,159 units (Banten 2023). This phenomenon in Serang City is presumed to be associated with low consumer purchasing intention. Preliminary field observations of several SMEs indicate that the primary issue lies in the suboptimal utilization of digital promotion through social media and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Many business owners continue to rely on conventional marketing methods, limiting their ability to reach a broader consumer base and influencing purchasing intention (Winarno & Indrawati 2022b). This is further supported by documentary analysis conducted by the author. The following table presents data reported by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Banten Province in 2023.

Table 1. Number of SMEs, Internet Usage, and Social Media Sales Promotion

Regency/City	Number of Food SMEs	Internet Usage	Social Media Sales Promotion
Pandeglang Regency	10.380	818	546
Lebak Regency	20.934	6.731	3.661
Tangerang Regency	18.849	10.749	5.322
Serang Regency	8.278	3.384	418
Tangerang City	15.999	9.228	6.039
Cilegon City	7.579	2.666	2.126
Serang City	5.159	3.097	1.408
South Tangerang	9.914	5.975	4.048
Banten Province	97.092	42.648	23.568

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of Banten Province, 2023.

The data presented above indicate that out of the total food SMEs in Serang City, only 3,097 utilize the internet, and 1,408 use social media for promotional purposes. This condition suggests that the use of social media as a promotional tool among SMEs in Serang City remains suboptimal. In fact, social media is recognized as a key driver in effectively enhancing consumer purchasing intention (Karina et al. 2022; Lindiani, Registiana et al. 2024; Taufik, Setiawan et al. 2023; Zhang & Noor 2026).

Furthermore, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Banten Province 2022 show that only 30% of food SMEs in Serang City actively request customer reviews (Dwisvimiari et al. 2023). As a result, SMEs that have not implemented e-WOM strategies tend to be less visible compared to competitors with established online reputations. Consumers are more likely to choose products that are well-known or easily accessible through digital platforms (Zahrah et al. 2023).

The issue is further exacerbated by the limited adoption of halal certification among food SMEs (Mardiana 2026). A 2023 survey by BPJPH revealed that 90% of Muslim consumers in Serang City prefer halal-labelled products (Operator 2023). Furthermore, (Seo et al. 2025) also found that consumers tend to select halal products as they are perceived to be safer, environmentally friendly, and aligned with personal values. Advances in technology and greater access to information have also influenced shifts in consumer purchasing intention (Ismail 2025).

Previous studies identify social media promotion, halal labelling, and e-WOM as key determinants of purchasing intention (Mala et al. 2023; Priatna dan Zaini 2025; Susilowati & Novitasari 2025). However, limited empirical models integrate these three variables within a unified analytical framework in a religiosity-based local market context. Most studies focus on businesses with well-established digital infrastructure and certification, leaving SMEs with resource constraints underexplored.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating social media promotion, halal labelling, and e-WOM into a single comprehensive model applied to food SMEs in Serang City. The motivation for this research is further supported by (Indonesia 2026), which highlights the need to address SME challenges related to digital literacy, legal compliance, branding, marketing, standardization, and certification. This study aims to examine the effects of social media promotion, e-WOM, and halal labelling on consumer purchasing intention among food SMEs in Serang City, both partially and simultaneously. The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on food SMEs in Serang City, the capital of Banten Province, which is expected to serve as a regional benchmark. The findings are expected to enrich the literature and provide practical contributions to the development of locally grounded marketing strategies.

Literature Review

Purchasing Intention

According to Thamrin, as cited in (Putri Sari 2020) Purchasing intention is part of consumer behavior within the context of consumption attitudes, reflecting respondents' tendency to act before their buying intention is fully realized (Zhou et al. 2021). Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller, as cited in (Nugroho et al. 2023) define purchasing intention as a consumer behavioral response toward an object that indicates a desire to make a purchasing. Five indicators characterize the purchasing intention variable. (Sihombing et al. 2019).

1. Exploratory interest refers to consumers' tendency to search for and compare various culinary product options as an initial attraction.
2. Consideration interest reflects consumers' tendency to evaluate aspects such as taste, price, ingredient quality, portion size, location, and brand reputation before making a purchasing decision.
3. Transactional interest denotes consumers' tendency to actually carry out a purchasing, such as placing an order or visiting a business location, indicating the closeness between intention and actual behavior.
4. Referential interest refers to consumers' tendency to recommend products to others based on positive experiences or perceptions.
5. Repurchasing interest represents the tendency to make repeat purchasings in the future as an expression of satisfaction and trust.

Social Media Promotion

Advertising through social media, as a form of new media, is widely used to reach consumers more effectively (Winarno & Indrawati 2022). Social media promotion is defined as marketing activities conducted through digital platforms or the internet to attract consumers and potential consumers efficiently (Andrian, 2019). There are five indicators of social media promotion (Arry & Fariz 2017; Dilasari et al. 2022).

1. Context describes the quality and relevance of promotional content displayed on social media.
2. Communication reflects the ability of business actors to build responsive and informative two-way communication.
3. Collaboration refers to partnerships with influencers, culinary communities, or delivery platforms to enhance product credibility and attractiveness.
4. Connection describes efforts to build long-term relationships through consistent postings and emotional engagement with consumers.
5. Promotional reach indicates the extent to which product information is widely disseminated, thereby increasing brand awareness and the likelihood of purchasing intention.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

e-WOM refers to consumer-to-consumer communication via the internet in sharing information and opinions about products or services. It is considered more effective than traditional word of mouth due to its broader reach, accessibility, and ability to disseminate information rapidly to a larger audience (Efendi & Chrismardani 2021). Five indicators define the e-WOM variable (Fauzi et al. 2023; Pirdaus et al. 2020; Zufaldi et al. 2019).

1. Positive reviews indicate favorable evaluations of food products.
2. Self-confidence reflects consumers' confidence in purchasing after reading consistent and credible reviews.
3. Concern for others represents consumers' willingness to share consumption experiences digitally.
4. Intensity refers to the frequency of exposure to reviews or recommendations.
5. Content describes the quality and depth of information provided in reviews, helping potential consumers imagine the consumption experience.

Halal Label

A halal label refers to an official marking indicating that a product complies with Islamic dietary laws (Amer 2026). The inclusion of a halal label on product packaging serves to inform and reassure consumers that the product has halal status. The Qur'an and Hadith, as primary sources of Islamic law, clearly establish guidelines regarding what is permissible (halal) and prohibited (haram), including food and beverages (Fathurrohman et al. 2024). Five indicators characterize the halal label variable (Fathurrohman et al. 2024).

1. The presence of an official halal logo on packaging indicates certification.
2. Halal raw materials refer to the use of ingredients and production processes compliant with halal principles.
3. Permanent placement on packaging reflects transparency and regulatory compliance.
4. Belief in product halalness represents consumers' level of trust in the overall production process.

- Supervision and testing indicate certification and monitoring by authorized institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council. Collectively, these indicators strengthen consumer trust and purchasing intention toward halal food products.

Hypothesis Development

The research model used in this study is presented as follows:

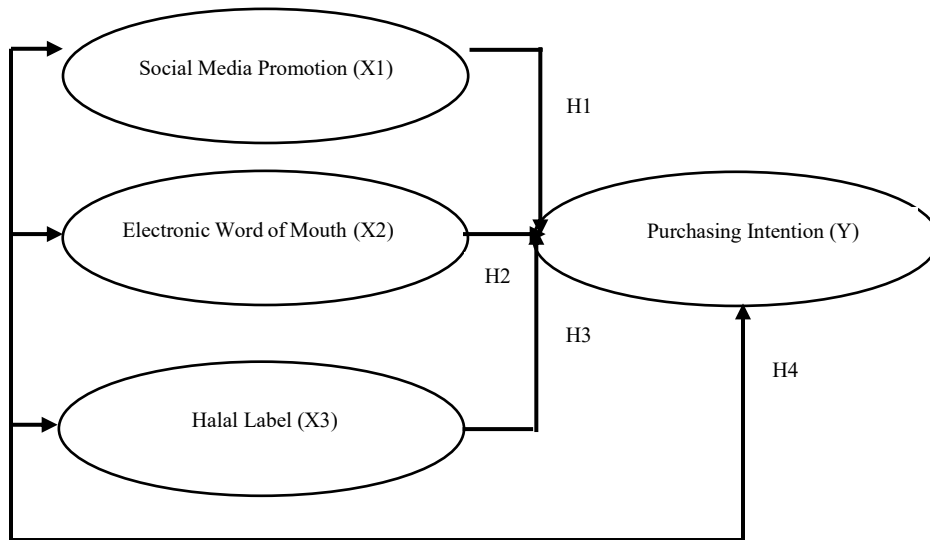


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Researcher's Illustration (processed, 2025)

The development of the hypothetical relationships in this study is formulated as follows:

The effect of social media promotion on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

For culinary micro-businesses, Marketing through digital networks, or what is usually called social media promotion, functions as an important signal mechanism that conveys product value and subsequently shapes the audience's purchasing desire. (Octavia 2022). By deploying engaging visual materials and maintaining interactive online communication, local food vendors in Serang City can successfully captivate potential buyers, thereby encouraging higher purchasing intention. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Mardalis et al. 2025; Ramdani & Sudrartono 2021; Sinaga & Sulistiono 2020).

H1: Social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

The effect of halal label on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

Beyond merely acting as a packaging feature, the halal labelling serves as a profound psychological and sociocultural trigger that fosters purchasing interest (Nizar, Muhammad; Ratnasari, Ririn Tri; Usman 2024). Past evidence indicates that shoppers naturally gravitate toward items bearing recognized halal certifications, heavily associating these logos with guaranteed safety and strict hygiene standards (Ismaya et al. 2022). The halal label assures product permissibility, safety, and quality, particularly for Muslim consumers. The presence of a halal label on food products of MSMEs in Serang City can enhance consumer

trust and positively influence purchasing intention (Fitriani 2023; Hamdani et al. 2021; Millatina et al. 2022).

H2: Halal labelling has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

The effect of electronic word of mouth on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) functions as a mechanism for shaping trust and perceived quality, which directly influences the formation of consumer purchasing intention (Tan & Nugroho 2025). Empirically, before purchasing food products, consumers tend to read reviews on marketplaces, check comments on Instagram or TikTok, and watch reviews from food vloggers. Information from fellow consumers is considered more honest and authentic than promotional messages from sellers (Ismagilova et al. 2020). Positive information disseminated through e-WOM can create favorable perceptions of local culinary MSME products in Serang City and increase consumer purchasing intention. This is supported by prior research (Aminda et al. 2023; Fathurrohman et al. 2024; Mardalis et al. 2025).

H3: Word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

The effect of social media promotion, halal label, and electronic word of mouth on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

Regarding social media promotion, food MSMEs that are active on Instagram, TikTok, or WhatsApp Business are easier to find, visually assess, and recognize in terms of brand identity, which in turn influences consumer purchasing intention (Purnama & Rohman 2024). In addition, halal labelling enhances consumers' sense of security and trust. In regions with a Muslim-majority population, such as Serang, halal labelling is not merely a religious symbol but also a guarantee that products are safe, clean, and compliant with established standards (Setyowati et al. 2025). Furthermore, the e-WOM variable strengthens social influence and product credibility (Lestari & Himawati 2026). Positive reviews, customer testimonials, and online recommendations make MSME products appear more trustworthy (Ismagilova et al. 2020). Simultaneously, social media promotion, halal labelling, and e-WOM play important roles in building consumer trust and positive perceptions. The combination of these three factors can enhance consumer purchasing intention toward food products in Serang City, in line with previous studies. (Hanafiah & Wibowo, Mas Wahyu Damayanti 2020; Hartini et al. 2022; Mardalis et al. 2025)

H4: Social media promotions, halal labelling, and word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intentions of food MSMEs in Serang City

Methodology

A quantitative associative design was applied in this research to systematically assess and statistically quantify the cause-and-effect interactions among the selected variables (Pratama et al. 2025). The demographic scope for this research encompasses inhabitants of Serang who exhibit a clear preference for, or historical consumption of, native culinary items. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method (Sugiyono 2024). Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific requirements: (1) they must be current residents of Serang

City; (2) they must have a history of buying or eating local MSME culinary products at least one time; (3) respondents have seen or been exposed to promotions of MSME food products in Serang City through social media; (4) respondents are aware of or pay attention to the presence of halal labels on MSME food products in Serang City; and (5) respondents have read or received online information or reviews (e-WOM) related to the products. These criteria were established to ensure that respondents possess relevant experience and understanding of the variables under investigation (Ghozali 2018). To establish an adequate participant pool, the study applied a widely accepted heuristic requiring five to ten observations per estimated parameter, ultimately capping the cohort at 200 individuals to efficiently evaluate the 20 analytical parameters (Hair Jr et al. 2019). With a total of 20 parameters, the maximum sample size is 200 respondents.

The primary data collection tool was a digital questionnaire constructed via Google Forms with a systematic structure (Wulandari et al. 2025). Data collection was operationalized via a structured digital survey deployed on Google Forms, utilizing a standard Likert-type scaling method to precisely quantify subjective psychosocial dimensions like consumer attitudes (Ghozali 2018). The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and digital community groups, as well as through field observation conducted by the researcher. Before mass deployment, a preliminary validation trial involving 30 individuals was executed to guarantee the survey's comprehensibility and structural integrity, to assess the feasibility and clarity of the questionnaire before wider distribution (Arora et al. 2025).

Subsequently, the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis, preceded by instrument testing (validity and reliability tests) and classical assumption tests (normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test). Hypothesis testing was conducted using partial tests (t-test), simultaneous tests (F-test), and the coefficient of determination (R^2). The data analysis process was carried out using SPSS version 25 software (Hair Jr et al. 2019). The research model produced in this study is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Operational Definitions

Variables Name	Operational Definition	Questionnaire Items	References
Social Media Promotion (X1)	Consumers' perceptions of promotional activities conducted by local culinary MSMEs in Serang through social media, including information delivery, interaction, engagement, and ease of connection.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The promotional content on social media meets my needs. 2. The information provided is easy to understand and relevant. 3. The MSME actively interacts with consumers through social media. 4. The MSME involves consumers in activities or promotions on social media. 5. Social media makes it easier for me to connect directly with the MSME. 	(Arry & Fariz 2017; Dilasari et al. 2022; Salim et al. 2022)

Halal Label (X2)	Consumers' perceptions of the presence and clarity of halal labels on culinary products as assurance of product permissibility, safety, and quality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The product has a clearly visible halal label on its packaging. 2. The halal label provides a sense of security when purchasing the product. 3. The halal label is clearly displayed on the packaging. 4. The halal label makes me confident that the product is truly halal. 5. The halal label has undergone supervision and testing by authorized institutions. 	(Asri et al. 2024; Salim et al. 2022)
Electronic Word of Mouth (X3)	Consumers' perceptions of reviews, recommendations, and experiences shared through social media regarding local culinary products in Serang.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I believe that positive reviews indicate previous customers' satisfaction. 2. After reading positive reviews, I became interested in purchasing. 3. I feel more confident after seeing reviews from other consumers. 4. I often read reviews before deciding to purchasing. 5. I am willing to recommend the product through social media. 	(Ardhiyanto et al. 2024; Fauzi et al. 2023; Pirdaus et al. 2020; Zufaldi et al. 2019)
Purchasing Intention (Y)	Consumers' behavioral tendency to make purchasing's, repurchasing's, and explore local culinary products in Serang after receiving promotional stimuli and information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The promotion attracts my attention to learn more about the product. 2. After seeing the promotion, I have the desire to purchasing. 3. I am interested in repurchasing the product. 4. I prefer local culinary MSME products in Serang compared to other culinary products. 5. I am interested in trying various product variants after seeing the promotion. 	(Sihombing et al. 2019);

Source: Researcher's Illustration (processed, 2025).

Results and Discussion

Results

Validity Test

Table 3. Validity Test Results

	Items	r-Calculated	r-Table	Description
Social Media Promotion (X1)	P1	0,726	0,138	Valid
	P2	0,816	0,138	Valid
	P3	0,782	0,138	Valid
	P4	0,769	0,138	Valid
	P5	0,799	0,138	Valid
	Items	r-Calculated	r-Table	Description
Halal Label (X2)	P1	0,869	0,138	Valid
	P2	0,888	0,138	Valid
	P3	0,806	0,138	Valid
	P4	0,832	0,138	Valid
	P5	0,786	0,138	Valid
	Items	r-Calculated	r-Table	Description
Electronic Word Of Mouth (X3)	P1	0,815	0,138	Valid
	P2	0,940	0,138	Valid
	P3	0,948	0,138	Valid
	P4	0,959	0,138	Valid
	P5	0,933	0,138	Valid
	Items	r-Calculated	r-Table	Description
Purchasing Intention (Y)	P1	0,880	0,138	Valid
	P2	0,766	0,138	Valid
	P3	0,809	0,138	Valid
	P4	0,851	0,138	Valid
	P5	0,842	0,138	Valid

Source: Primary data processed with using SPSS Version 25 (2025)

Initial psychometric evaluations confirmed that all measurement items for variables X1 (Social media promotion), X2 (Halal label), X3 (Electronic word of mouth), and Y (Purchasing intention). Furthermore, pre-estimation diagnostic checks verified that the dataset satisfies all fundamental statistical prerequisites:

Reliability Test

Table 4. Results of Social Media Promotion Reliability Test

Social Media Promotion (X1)	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.835	5
Halal Label (X2)	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.891	5
Electronic Word of Mouth (X3)	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.953	5

Reliability Statistics		
Purchasing Intention (Y)	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.887	5

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025)

Based on the reliability test results for variables X1 (Social media promotion), X2 (Halal label), X3 (Electronic word of mouth), and Y (Purchasing intention), they are declared reliable.

Normality Test

Table 5. Kolmogorov Smirnov Normality Test Results
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		200
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.85716075
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.036
	Positive	.036
	Negative	-.034
Test Statistic		.036
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

Source: Primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025)

It can be concluded that, based on the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the data is normally distributed because the significance value (asympt. sig) is $0.200 > 0.05$.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Result

Coefficients^a		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
Social Media Promotion	0.523	1.911
Halal Label	0.533	1.901
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.593	1.907

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Intention

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025)

Collinearity diagnostics revealed Variance Inflation Factors well below the restrictive ceiling of 10, alongside adequate Tolerance levels, and the Tolerance value is greater than 0.1. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no multicollinearity in the regression model.

Heteroscedasticities Test

Table 7. Heteroscedasticities Glejser Result Test

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.171	.635		4.992	0.000
Social Media Promotion	.020	.030	.064	0.666	0.506
Halal Label	-.092	.030	-.094	-0.681	0.502
Electronic Word ofMouth	-.013	.025	-.035	-.510	0.611

a. Dependent Variable: Abs_Res

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov diagnostic yielded a significance metric exceeding the 0.05 threshold, thereby affirming a normal distribution of residuals.

Hypothesis Testing (Partial T-Test)

Table 8. T Result Test

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.781	1.070		1.665	0.097
Social Media Promotion	0.205	0.050	0.206	4.108	.000
Halal Label	0.707	0.050	0.705	14.042	.000
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.044	0.042	0.038	1.046	0.297

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Intention

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025).

Simultaneous F Hypothesis Test

Table 9. F Test Results

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1971.620	3	657.207	187.675	.000 ^b
Residual	686.360	196	3.502		
Total	2657.980	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic Word of Mouth, Social Media Promotion, Halal Label

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025).

By comparing the calculated F value > table F value ($187.675 > 2.65$) with the significance result of $0.000 < 0.05$, the result of the F test is that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, meaning that the variables Social Media Promotion (X1), Halal Label (X2), and Electronic Word of Mouth (X3) together have a significant effect on Purchasing Intention (Y).

Determination Coefficient Analysis

Table 10. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861 ^a	.742	.738	1.87132

a. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic Word of Mouth, Social Media Promotion, Halal Label

Source: primary data processed using SPSS version 25 software (2025).

The regression model used has a feature to explain 74.2% of the effect. The remaining 26.8% is Influenced by other variables not included in this research model.

Discussion

Social Media Promotion Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Purchasing Intention

The partial t-test results indicate that social media promotion has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intention, with a t-value of 4.108, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.972, and a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). The regression coefficient of 0.205 suggests that any increase in social media promotional activities will lead to an increase in consumers' purchasing intention.

Digital network marketing proves highly advantageous for Serang City's culinary vendors by granting them a seamless channel to distribute product details and engage intimately with their target market (Maria et al. 2024). Furthermore, because local residents frequently rely on online communities to discover dining options, appetizing food visuals can easily go viral, thereby shaping public perception, causing visual food content to spread quickly and influence consumer perceptions (Benicta & Widyatmoko 2026). Furthermore, approximately 60% of food MSMEs rely on social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram, which are considered easier to use and more cost-efficient compared to conventional promotional media such as banners, signboards, and billboards (Khaeruman & Fatari 2025).

Culinary tourism in Serang City is also consistently promoted through social media because it is perceived as unique, aesthetic, and culturally rich. This is supported by high consumer visits to Pasar Lama Serang City, the Islamic Centre, and Royal Baroe Serang, making food MSMEs in Serang City consistently attractive to visitors (Husaini 2025). These findings support Philip Kotler's marketing communication theory, which states that social media promotion is a digital marketing strategy aimed at increasing brand awareness, building trust, and encouraging purchasing intention (Danurdara et al. 2024). This study is also consistent with previous research (Fauzi et al. 2023; Hasan & Erika 2023; Mala et al. 2023; Winarno & Indrawati 2022).

Halal Label Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Purchasing Intention

The partial t-test results show that the halal label variable has a positive and significant effect on purchasing intention, with a t-value of 14.042, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.972, and a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). The regression coefficient of 0.707 indicates that the halal label is the most dominant variable compared to other variables in this study.

Conceptually, halal labelling increases purchasing intention by reducing perceived risk, particularly risks related to consumption safety (Sarnanda et al. 2026). Halal certification enhances consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions, thereby reducing uncertainty (Ismail 2025). At the same time, halal labelling strengthens institutional recognition and increases product legitimacy (Ismaya et al. 2022).

Aside from logical economic evaluations, the choice to acquire halal goods is heavily steered by deep-seated religious convictions a value-driven process crucial to Serang City's predominantly Muslim demographic (Damayanti & Iqbal 2025). Aligning their dietary choices with Islamic laws offers these buyers a profound sense of ethical fulfillment and spiritual tranquility, defined as a sense of comfort and peace because consumption decisions align with religious teachings and ethical values (Sari et al. 2025). The influence of halal labelling is particularly strong in Serang City due to its dominant Islamic culture (Hermawan et al. 2025).

Therefore, halal labelling is not merely viewed as a product attribute but also as a symbol of compliance with religious values and social norms (Camelia & Ekawati 2024). These findings are consistent with previous studies (Amer 2026; Damayanti & Iqbal 2025; Ismaya et al. 2022; Seo et al. 2025) and align with the Theory of Reasoned Action, which states that behavioral intention is determined by attitudes toward behavior and subjective norms (Nuriasih et al. 2025).

Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) Does Not Have a Significant Partial Effect on Purchasing Intention

Based on the partial statistical evaluation (t-test), it was found that the Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) variable fails to exert a meaningful impact on consumer purchasing intention, with a t-value of 1.046, which is lower than the t-table value of 1.972, and a significance level of 0.297 (> 0.05). The findings suggest that e-WOM has not yet become the primary factor driving purchasing intention among consumers of food MSMEs in Serang City (Tj et al. 2022). Many consumers still rely more on direct experience when trying products rather than reading digital reviews (Tonda et al. 2024). Recommendations from family, friends, and close communities are considered more credible than online comments (Yuliani 2025).

Additionally, strong local communities make face-to-face social networks more influential in shaping purchasing decisions (Risyan et al. 2021). On the other hand, food MSMEs in Serang City still have relatively low engagement in managing online reviews, as promotions are mainly conducted through WhatsApp status updates and WhatsApp groups, resulting in an underdeveloped e-WOM ecosystem (Fauzan et al. 2025). These findings are consistent with previous studies (Abad Amru Al Majid 2022; Nur Idris et al. 2023) and can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which suggests that when consumers have low involvement or do not perceive online reviews as important and credible information, the resulting attitudes tend to be weak and unstable (Karoline et al. 2023).

Social Media Promotion, Halal Label, and Electronic Word of Mouth Simultaneously Have a Significant Effect on Purchasing Intention

Omnibus statistical evaluations confirm a substantial collective impact of Social Media Promotion, Halal Label, and e-WOM simultaneously have a significant effect on Purchasing Intention. This is evidenced by an F-statistic of 187.675, which easily surpasses the 2.65 critical threshold at a highly significant p-value (0.000). Moreover, the model's coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.742$) establishes that these three independent elements successfully capture 74.2% of the observed variance in purchasing intention.

Each variable influences purchasing intention through different perceptual mechanisms. Social media promotion enhances brand awareness through content exposure that makes products easier to recognize and understand (Lian et al. 2026). Halal labelling builds trust by assuring compliance with established standards and quality (Fadlulah et al. 2021; Rahmatika & Mukhsin 2024). Meanwhile, e-WOM provides social validation through reviews and recommendations from other consumers (Lucero et al. 2025).

When combined, these elements generate strong cognitive, emotional, and social stimuli for consumers (Tan & Nugroho 2025; Utomo et al. 2024; Widyaningrum 2018). Social media promotion generates cognitive appeal by providing clear product information and attractive visuals; halal labelling offers emotional assurance by ensuring product compliance with quality standards; and e-WOM delivers social validation through peer recommendations. This outcome strongly supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, demonstrating that a person's intention to act is shaped by their subjective norms, attitude toward the behavior, and perceived control (Ajzen 1991).

Conclusion

This study finds that social media promotion and halal labelling significantly influence purchasing intention, while e-WOM does not show a significant partial effect. It contributes to digital and halal marketing literature in regional MSMEs by highlighting the importance of trust and promotional communication. Practically, MSMEs in Serang Local vendors must aggressively leverage digital visual content and secure official Islamic dietary certifications to maximize market superiority. Due to the restricted geographical focus and the omission of internal psychological barriers like consumer skepticism, subsequent investigations are encouraged to integrate complex moderating constructs to deepen these empirical insights.

Author's Contribution

The entire research team actively engaged in developing this document: Dian was responsible for data collection and conceptualization. Syihab and Isti provided excellent guidance and critically revised the article. Irfan provided input on ideas, opinions, critical analysis, and research issues, and was responsible for the publication of this manuscript. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Manuscript Preparation Process

During the work on this manuscript, the author(s) used Artificial intelligence utilities (ChatGPT, EditGPT), which were deployed strictly for grammatical enhancement and linguistic polishing. The research team thoroughly vetted all automated suggestions and assumes total accountability for the academic integrity and final message of the paper.

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