

Brand Image Determination, Price Perception, and Brand Trust in the Purchase Decision of Low Cost Carrier Airlines in Indonesia

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Abstract: The main objective of this study is to examine various factors that affect the consumer decision-making process when purchasing tickets from low-cost airlines in Indonesia. This study focuses on analyzing the influence of three main factors, namely brand image, price perception, and trust, on the final purchase choice. This study uses a quantitative methodology, using primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was obtained by providing questionnaires to low-cost carrier users to get a direct perspective from customers. This study shows that trust, price perception, and brand image are important variables influencing consumers' decisions to buy low-cost carriers in Indonesia. The study's findings show that LCC customers' purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by their perceptions of brand image, trust, and pricing. Customers are more inclined to select airlines they believe to be dependable and safe, therefore trust is an important consideration. Another important factor is price perception, which shows how customers react to competitive pricing that matches the value they anticipate. Airlines that successfully create a green brand image and keep prices competitive can stand out in the market as consumers' awareness of environmental issues grows. Empirical evidence from this study suggests that incorporating sustainability into business strategies may appeal to the increasing number of environmentally conscious consumers. Finally, airlines who are effective in creating a positive brand image stand out in the competitive low-cost carrier (LCC) sector, demonstrating the importance of brand image as a decision driver.

Keywords: brand image, price perception, purchase decision, trust.

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INTRODUCTION

The aviation business in Indonesia is growing rapidly and makes all aviation service companies strive to compete to be the best (Nugraha, 2021; Praja et al., 2023). Service quality has become a key in the topic of marketing. Branding is one of the interesting topics to study also because branding is a competitive strategy (Gupta et al., 2020; Wahyuni & Praninta, 2021). Airlines are classified into two categories, namely, Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) and



Full-Service Carriers (FSCs). FSC airlines have routes to major airports and offer flights affiliated with them and have higher standards such as comfortable seats, free drinks and catering on board, newspapers, magazines, or in-flight entertainment (Cho et al., 2018).

Currently, 6 major airlines in Indonesia compete fiercely to win the hearts of consumers, through a variety of services offered. Lion Air leads in LCC services, while Garuda Indonesia in full service (Setiawan et al., 2020). Based on data from the 2024 Top Brand Award, there are three best brands of LCC airlines, namely Air Asia with a value of 16.10%, Citilink with a value of 15.90, and Lion Air with a value of 13.60%. The influence of brand, price, and trust on purchases on low-cost carriers (LCCs) is significant in influencing customer preferences. LCC airlines with strong branding can create a positive image in the minds of customers, differentiate them from competitors, and make customers more likely to choose them for their trips. In addition, transparency and affordable pricing are also important factors in determining customer preferences. Customer confidence in low-cost airlines is crucial in making their choice. Passenger attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control are essential in the purchasing behavior of LCC passengers. More importantly, ticket prices can change the intent of behavior and use of LCCs (Truong et al., 2020).

In the low-cost airline industry, customers are generally more concerned about price compared to customers of traditional airlines that offer full service (Shen & Yahya, 2021). Communication and building relationships are becoming more thanks to technological advancements such as social media applications. One of the factors that contributes to the success of digital marketing platforms such as social media is the use of influencers. Effective marketing entails keeping the product in the minds of consumers so that they choose to buy the product offered (Siburian & Anggrainie, 2022).

Meanwhile, branding can be in the form of a series of sales and communication methods that help differentiate a company or product from competitors, so that it can create a lasting impression in the minds of consumers. In a competitive market, a company can make a significant impact on the business environment through the creation of their own brand (Gupta et al., 2021). Viewed from the perspective of word of mouth, negative and positive perceptions of WOM also affect purchase intentions, that is, if negative perceptions arise then purchase intentions will be low and vice versa, if positive perceptions arise then purchase intentions will also increase. Furthermore, the perception that emerges among customers will influence the purchasing behavior (Soelasih & Sumani, 2021).

In online travel, brand trust has a big impact, consumer trust in the brand can influence the purchase decision, the company must improve integrity by offering different types of tickets to convince consumers and provide what consumers want, so as to make consumers feel that the product represents their interests (Rosyidin & Prihatini, 2020). One example of a low cost carrier is Citilink flights which are positioned as low cost carriers with very good brand positioning, where passengers intend to buy back because of their confidence in affordable prices (Pratisthita et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, airline reputation, service quality, price, frequent flyer programs, digital marketing, and advertising influence customer decisions about what they buy. These factors vary depending on whether the airline is full-service or low-cost (Karaağaoğlu & Gündüz, 2023). It added that perceptions, attitudes, family and friends, difficulty level, fulfillment of needs, satisfaction, security, and timely availability are two categories of factors that influence purchasing behavior (Koti, 2019).

The marketing mix also provides a significant factor in the purchase decision that there is a significant positive relationship between the three elements of the marketing mix, namely product, promotion, and place,

and passenger purchase decision-making. In addition, there are studies that state that there is a significant negative relationship between price and passenger purchase decision making (Abdelhady et al., 2019). Likewise, brand image in online travel can increase customer trust and loyalty (Wilis & Nurwulandari, 2020). Meanwhile, customer perception of the price sold on low cost carrier flights can affect customer interest in buying back (Purba et al., 2021).

Brand credibility in consumer decision-making is essential because the comfort and affective commitment generated by such credibility can increase purchase intent (Jeng, 2016). Customer satisfaction research in China on pricing shows that The price factor does not have an impact on business passenger satisfaction and tourism customer satisfaction, but ticket prices have a positive and significant impact on overall passenger satisfaction (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). Social media relevance is that engagement on social media is used to assess the effectiveness of advertising, while the impact of perceived service quality is considered to measure its effect on perceived value, and its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Lee et al., 2018).

METHODS

The design of this study was carried out through a quantitative approach with data collection using a survey method with a total of 140 respondents using Air Asia, Citilink and Lion Air airlines. With substantial market shares and well-known brands, Citilink, Air Asia, and Lion Air are some of the leading companies in the Indonesian low-cost carrier sector. Since these airlines are the main choices for customers looking for low-cost air travel within Indonesia, their prevalence offers a solid foundation for assessing customer perceptions. The distribution of this questionnaire is carried out continuously for a period of 1–2 months until the number of respondents needed is sufficient. The variable measurements were carried out based on the Likert scale with a scale of 1 to 5. The primary data from the results of questionnaires and secondary data from articles, journals, books, or other sources. The data analysis technique uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Partial Least Square (PLS) variant. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a form of analysis that includes a combination of several approaches including factor analysis, structural modeling, and path analysis. In this study, two types of models are used, namely the Measurement Model Test (Outer Model) and the Structural Model Test (Inner Model) (Juliandi, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents of this study are customers who use flights with low-cost carriers, which is Citilink, Lion Air, and Air Asia Indonesia. This study uses four variables, namely brand image, price perception, trust, and purchase decisions. The first step of this study is to conduct a validity test. The research is confirmatory so that a convergent validity test is carried out and the rule of thumb is used as a loading factor value on the condition that it must have a value of more than 0.7 because the value shows that the indicator has a good validity value (Table 1).

Further evaluation, the Average Variance Inflation Factor (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5. This indicates that more than 50% of the variance of the indicator is explained by the construct and has sufficient convergence validity (Table 2).

Table 1 Outer Loading Factor Value

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Brand Image	CM1	0.866
	CM2	0.862
	CM3	0.792
	CM4	0.745
	CM5	0.739
Price Perception	PH1	0.713
	PH2	0.737
	PH3	0.854
	PH4	0.780
Trust	KC1	0.838
	KC2	0.761
	KC3	0.847
	KC4	0.870
Purchase Decision	KP1	0.757

Source: Data processed by the author

Table 2 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Variable	AVE
Brand Image	0.644
Price Perception	0.689
Trust	0.606
Purchase Decision	0.598

Source: Data by the author

This study was declared valid with an AVE value greater than 0.5. The discriminatory validity test is used to test the cross loading of the construction measurement (Table 3). In addition, the cross loading value has a function that shows how strong the correlation between the construct and the indicator.

The research comparing the root value of AVE and the correlation between constructs has the recommended result that the root value of AVE should be greater than the correlation between constructs. The AVE value and the square root of the AVE on each construct are described in Table 4.

After knowing the value of the square root of the AVE for each construct, the next step is to compare the square root of the AVE with the correlation between the constructs in the model (Table 5).

Table 3 Cross Loading Value

	Brand Image	Price Perception	Trust	Purchase Decision
CM1	0.866	0.383	0.445	0.512
CM2	0.862	0.368	0.480	0.506
CM3	0.792	0.357	0.403	0.457
CM4	0.745	0.316	0.359	0.412
CM5	0.739	0.303	0.335	0.393
KC1	0.327	0.838	0.348	0.290
KC2	0.318	0.761	0.398	0.359
KC3	0.442	0.847	0.530	0.465
KC4	0.308	0.870	0.347	0.293
KP1	0.315	0.285	0.757	0.558
KP2	0.466	0.503	0.770	0.425
KP3	0.423	0.355	0.836	0.409
KP5	0.384	0.457	0.747	0.403
PH1	0.340	0.284	0.431	0.713
PH2	0.422	0.264	0.443	0.737
PH3	0.499	0.371	0.708	0.854
PH4	0.493	0.433	0.475	0.780

Source: Data processed by the author

Table 4 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and AVE Square Root Values

Variable	AVE	AVE Square Root
Brand Image	0.644	0.802
Price Perception	0.689	0.773
Trust	0.606	0.830
Purchase Decision	0.598	0.778

Source: Data processed by the author

Table 5 Correlation Value between Constructs with Square Root Value AVE

Variable	Brand Image	Price perception	Trust	Purchase Decision
Brand Image	0.82			
Price perception	0.432	0.830		
Trust	0.510	0.505	0.778	
Purchase decision	0.572	0.440	0.689	0.773

Source: Data processed by the author

The composite reliability value is above 0.70 for each construct, so it is considered reliable where the brand image reliability value is 0.900, price perception is 0.885, trust is 0.898, and purchase decision is 0.860. Meanwhile, the Cronbach alpha value for brand image is 0.861, price perception is 0.778, trust is 0.852, and purchase decision is 0.784. Based on the alpha Cronbach, all variables are considered reliable because they are above 0.70.

R square shows how much variation in dependence (purchase decision) can be explained by independent variables (brand image, price perception, and trust). The purchase decision variable has an R-Square of 0.533, which means that the purchase decision can be explained or influenced by the variables Brand Image, Price Perception and Trust by 53.3%. Meanwhile, 46.7% is explained by variables outside this study.

Testing through the outer model test showed that the measured construction had good reliability, and that brand image, price perception, and overall trust had a significant influence on purchase decisions, which were responsible for more than half of the variables that occurred in purchase decisions.

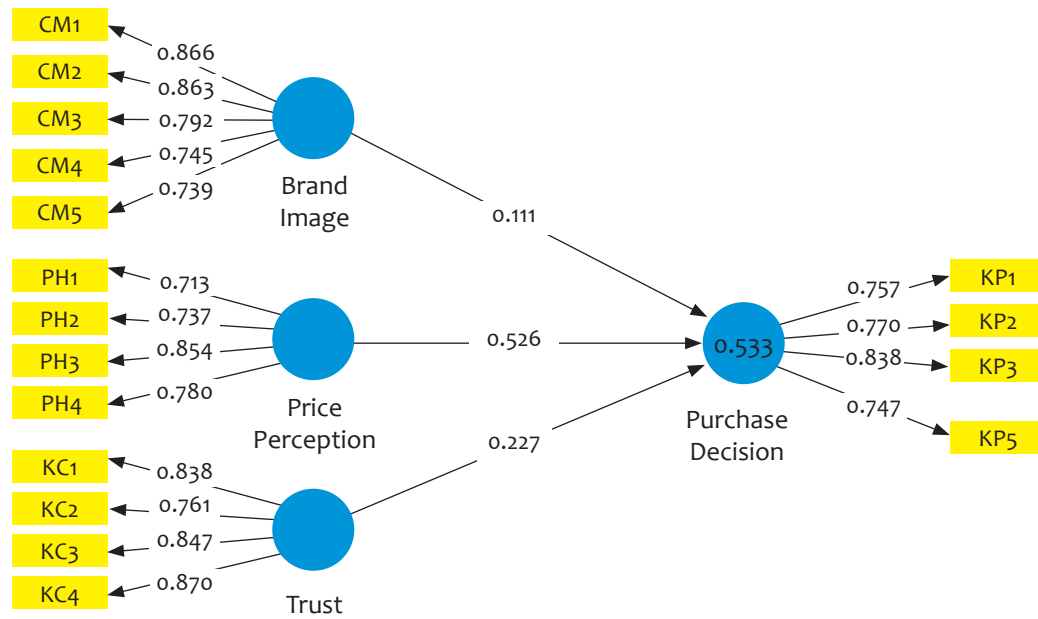
After testing the outer model, the next test is the inner model. This study uses the Goodness of Fit (GoF) evaluation which aims to validate the model thoroughly. GoF is a single measure used to validate combined performance between the outer model and the inner model.

The goodness of Fit (GoF) value model is 0.503, overall, the model has a higher combined performance from the 0–1 scale which is divided into small GoF = 0.1, medium GoF = 0.25 and large GoF = 0.38. With the values that have been listed, it can be concluded that the model or performance of the relationship between the outer and inner models is fit or valid.

Figure 1 shows the outer model of purchasing decisions. The R² calculation result is 0.533 which results from the influence of brand image, price perception and trust. It can be said that the three variables, brand image, price perception, and trust influence purchasing decisions by 0.533 or 53.3%, while the remaining 46% is influenced by other factors outside the three variables above. Furthermore, the brand image variable has a direct effect on purchasing decisions by 0.111, price perception has a direct effect of 0.526, and trust has a direct effect of 0.277 on purchasing decisions. Brand image has an influence on ticket purchasing decisions, but it is not significant because it has a coefficient value of only 11.1%.

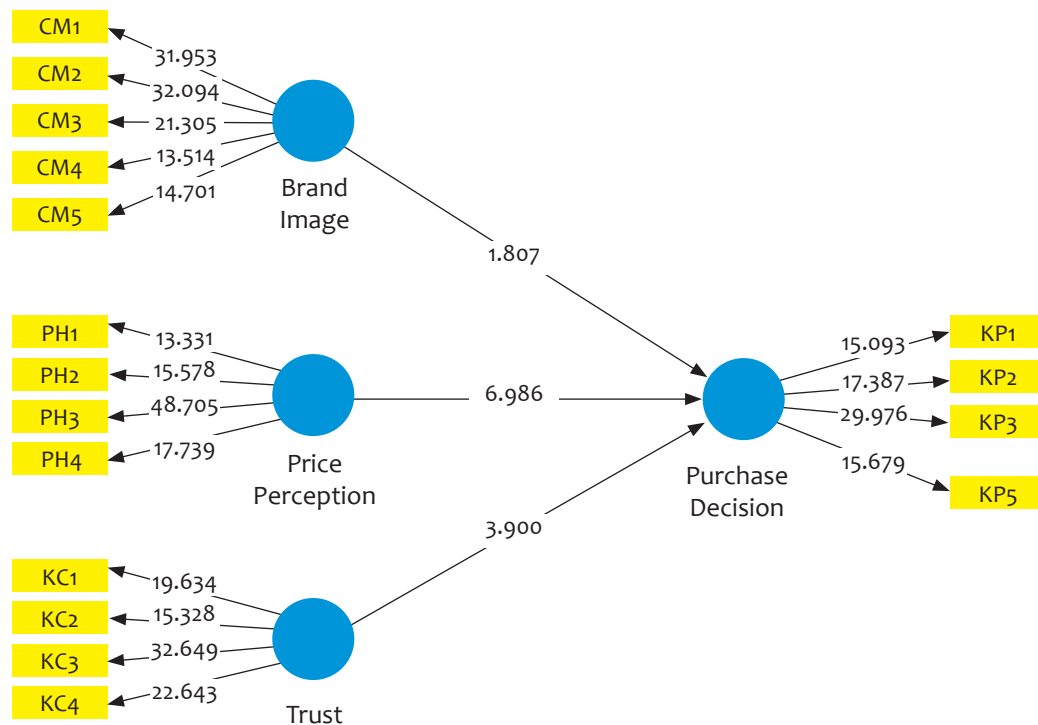
The rules of thumb used were t-statistics > 1.64 for the one-tailed hypothesis with a significance level of p-value < 0.05 (5%). As well as a beta coefficient with a positive value. The results of this research model can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows the inner model of low-cost airline ticket purchasing decisions, with three main variables: brand image, price perception, and trust. Based on the results of the analysis, brand image (t-statistic = 1.807), price perception (t-statistic = 6.986) and trust (t-statistic = 3.900) have a significant influence on ticket purchasing decisions, with t-statistics above 1.64.



Source: Processed by the author

Figure 1 Outer and Inner Model Results



Source: Processed by the author

Figure 2 Inner and Outer Model Result for Model Validity

Brand image has a t-statistic of 1.807, which means its influence is relatively small but still significant (Table 6). Price perception (t-statistic 6.986) and trust (t-statistic 3.900) show a much greater influence on purchasing decisions (Table 6).

Table 6 Hypothesis Result

Variables	Beta Coefficient	t-Statistic	P Value	Hypothesis
Brand Image	0.139	1.807 > 1.64	0.036 < 0.05	Accepted
Price Perception	0.532	6.986 > 1.64	0 < 0.05	Accepted
Trust	0.238	3.9 > 1.64	0 < 0.05	Accepted

The first hypothesis tests whether Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on the Purchase Decision. The test results showed that the value of the Brand Image beta coefficient to Purchase Decision was 0.139, then the t-statistic was 1.807 and the p-value was 0.036. From this result, it was stated that t-statistics had a significant effect because it was >1.64 with a p-value of <0.05 so that it could be said that the first hypothesis was accepted. This shows that Brand Image is proven to have a positive effect and has a significant influence on Purchase Decisions. With the positive and significant numbers, it can be seen that the better the company's brand image, the more potential consumers will remember it and the brand image will be more attached to the products offered and the more likely buyers are to buy the product.

The results of this research support previous studies where brand image has a significant influence on purchases on the Shopee online market (Mbeté & Tanamal, 2020), purchase decision Sari Roti (Jasmani & Sunarsi, 2020), purchase decision shampoo Pantene (Dewi et al., 2020), purchase decision smart phone (Savitri et al., 2022), dan purchase digital product (Rahman et al., 2020).

The results of research in various sectors show that brand image has an important role as a factor that influences customers' purchasing decisions. Furthermore, in the world of airlines, several studies also show the importance of brand image in the decision to purchase Garuda plane tickets (Wahyuni & Praninta, 2021), purchase plane tickets through Traveloka (Anwar & Andrean, 2021), decision to purchase low cost airline tickets (Benhardy et al., 2020). The results of previous research show that brand image in the industry is well-known enough to have a very significant influence, some even surpassing other variables.

The second hypothesis tests whether Price Perception has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. The test results showed that the value of the beta coefficient of Price Perception on Purchase Decision was 0.532, then t-statistic of 6.986 and p-value of 0.000. From these results, it is known that t-statistics have no significant effect because > 1.64 and p-value <0.05 so it can be said that the second hypothesis is accepted. This shows that Price Perception has proven to have a positive effect and has a significant effect on Purchase Decisions. With positive and significant numbers, it can be identified that the better the price perception offered to consumers, the more the decision to buy air tickets will increase.

The results of this research confirm previous studies, where price perception has a very strong influence on airplane ticket purchasing decisions (Anwar & Andrean, 2021; Benhardy et al., 2020), then Truong et al. (2020) stated that the price factor is very influential on the decision to purchase airline tickets at LCCs in Asian countries. In addition, fair prices can increase customer confidence which has an impact on ticket purchasing decisions (Setiawan et al., 2020). The price perception variable is very dominant in influencing the decision to buy LCC tickets. Because with LCC status, airlines focus on competitive prices, so this is the main consideration for customers.

The third hypothesis tests whether Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. The test results showed that the value of the beta coefficient of Trust in Purchase Decision was 0.238, then the t-statistic was 3.900 and the p-value was 0.000. From these results, it is known that t-statistics have a significant effect because > 1.64 and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ so it can be said that the third hypothesis is accepted. This shows that Trust has proven to have a positive effect and has a significant influence on Purchase Decisions. The results of this research show that trust has a direct influence on the decision to buy, this is different from the results of previous research which stated that trust is a mediating factor in the decision to buy plane tickets (Ahmad et al., 2020; Zeren & Kara, 2020; Febrin et al., 2020).

Previous research states that trust is not a variable that directly influences the decision to buy plane tickets, but is a mediator of brand image, brand awareness, EWOM, and brand equity. However, the results of this research support the results of research in the online purchasing sector which states that trust influences purchasing decisions (Agustina & Azmi, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2021; Mahliza, 2020) Trust is the second most significant variable in influencing buyer decisions.

Furthermore, the price perception and consumer trust are the main factors that drive the decision to purchase low-cost airline tickets. Consumers are more influenced by ticket prices than they consider affordable and trust in airline services. Meanwhile, brand image influences decisions significantly lower than the previous two variables, this shows that brand reputation is not the main determining factor for consumers looking for cheap tickets. Airlines can optimize their brand image by using stronger branding strategies and highlighting the company's values. To strengthen price perception, airlines must make ticket prices fair and transparent.

Low cost carrier (LCC) contribute significantly to green marketing with the concepts of the strategies by practicing fuel efficiency and carbon offsetting by using a new aircraft which more fuel efficient, sustainable operations, waste reduction, green procurement, customer engagement, digitalization by reducing using paper, community and stakeholder engagement, green certification and alliances, using electric ground support equipment to reduce emission at the airport (Sari et al., 2022), and implement electric ground support equipment at the airport more ecological friendly (Sari et al., 2023).

In addition to reducing the environmental effect, LCCs can improve their brand image and attract the increasing number of environmentally concerned tourists by implementing green marketing strategies. A competitive edge, increased market share, and customer loyalty can result from this strategic integration of sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study provides in-depth insight into the factors that influence the decision to purchase air tickets on low-cost carriers (LCCs) in Indonesia. The results of this study show that brand image, price perception, and brand trust are the three main factors that significantly influence consumers' decision to buy LCC tickets.

A positive and strong brand image proves to be an important driver in purchasing decisions. LCC airlines that have succeeded in building a good brand image in the eyes of consumers, tend to be preferred. This shows the importance for LCC airlines to continue to strengthen and maintain their brand image through various effective marketing and communication strategies.

Positive price perceptions, which means consumers feel the price of tickets is in line with the value they receive, also have a significant impact on purchase decisions. LCC airlines can attract more customers by offering competitive and transparent prices, as well as providing added value through promotions or additional services.

Brand trust is a very important factor in the aviation industry. Consumers tend to choose LCC airlines that they believe will provide reliable, safe, and quality services. Building brand trust requires consistency in providing good service, as well as the ability to handle customer complaints or issues quickly and effectively.

Low-cost carriers (LCCs), which are essential in advancing green marketing techniques, have a special chance to incorporate eco-friendly projects into their brand plans. LCCs can drastically reduce their carbon footprint by purchasing fuel-efficient aircraft, implementing sustainable operating procedures, and implementing extensive waste reduction initiatives. LCCs can also improve their environmental credentials through sustainable ground operations, green procurement, and consumer interaction.

In addition to showing a dedication to sustainability, open reporting, community service, and earning green certifications appeal to the increasing number of environmentally conscious customers. In the end, LCCs can gain a competitive edge, cultivate client loyalty, and benefit the environment by incorporating these green efforts into their main business plans. Long-term profitability and brand resilience in the aviation sector are ensured by this strategic change towards sustainability, which is advantageous for the environment as well as meeting changing consumer demands.

The study had some limitations, only three LCC airlines and using cross-sectional data. Future research could expand the scope by involving more LCC airlines and using longitudinal data to track changes in consumer behavior over time. Additionally, further research can delve deeper into other factors that may influence purchasing decisions, such as the quality of customer service, loyalty programs, and the influence of social media.

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