



Exploresearch

Impact Factor (Cosmos: 6.262 & I2OR: 3.585)

© Copyright by MGM Publishing House (MGMPH)

www.mgmpublications.com



The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention

Komal Goyal¹ & Nikita Yadav^{2*}

^{1,2}Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India.

*Corresponding author: nikitaydv05@gmail.com

Citation: Goyal, K., & Yadav, N. (2026). The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention. *Exploresearch*, 03(02), 198–206. <https://doi.org/10.62823/exre/2026/03/02.237>

Article History:

Received: 10 June 2026

Revised: 19 June 2026

Accepted: 25 June 2026

Published: 30 June 2026

Keywords:

Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behavior, Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Personalization, Brand Trust.

Abstract: Digital marketing is a major tool that firms use to communicate, engage and convert consumers via search engines, social media, websites, emails, mobile apps and online forums. The present paper is an evidence-based conceptual review that investigates the effects of digital marketing on the purchase intention of consumers. Embracing theory of planned behavior, digital marketing theory, social media marketing research, eWOM research, and personalization research, the paper suggests that content quality, social media engagement, eWOM, influencer credibility, and personalization impact on purchase intention through perceived value, brand trust, and consumer engagement. Hypotheses, a measurement plan and managerial guidelines to test these hypotheses in future are also provided in the paper. The contribution is a structured explanation of the modification in the process of purchase of the customer from linear buying process to an interactive, data-driven and trust-mediated path.

Introduction

Digital marketing has revolutionized the way companies generate awareness, convey value and trigger consumer action. Whereas the traditional mass communication offers only limited possibilities of search visibility, interactive content, targeting in real time, customization, and consumer engagement measurement across the specific touch points, digital marketing is capable of delivering all of these features and more [1] [2]. The above features make digital marketing relevant to the measurement of purchase intention, namely the conscious plan or possibility of a consumer to purchase a product or service in the future [3]. Purchase intention is important because it is the link between marketing exposure and actual buying behavior. Theory of planned behavior is the theory that describes intention as a key determinant of behavior and provides that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are found determinants of intention [3]. In digital environments, these determinants influence information quality, reviews, interactions with brands, credibility of influencers, and personalised messages. This makes the consumer decision to purchase not solely the result of brand-led advertising, but also peer recommendations, algorithmic content, and interaction facilitated by platforms [4]-[7]. Drawing on previous studies, this paper explores the effect of digital marketing on purchase intention of

consumers through a conceptual and theoretical framework. The proposed relationship between DMT dimensions, mediation variables, and purchase intention is shown in Fig. 1 and the digital touchpoints and their effect on consumers' progression from awareness to purchase intention in Fig. 2. The paper seeks to answer three research questions: What are the dimensions of digital marketing that impact the purchase intention of consumers, how do they affect consumers through psychological mechanisms and how can future empirical research measure the digital marketing and purchase intention relationship.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. The literature review for the second section is organized into the following subsections: digital marketing, social media engagement, electronic word of mouth, the credibility of influencers, and personalization. Conceptual framework and hypotheses are presented in Section III. A methodology for empirical testing is presented in Section IV. The findings and implications are discussed in Sections V and VI, the limitations and future research are discussed in Section VIII and the conclusion is presented in Section IX of the paper.

Literature Review

• Digital Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Digital marketing is defined as the process of using digital technologies and digital channels to generate, communicate, deliver and maintain value to customers [1]. Kannan and Li [1] suggest that digital marketing research is a series of touchpoints starting from the acquisition, engagement, conversion and retention process. In the same vein, Tiago and Verissimo assert that digital and social media are not just communication vehicles but vehicles for dialogue, participation and customer relationships based on data [2]. From a consumer behaviour perspective, digital marketing alters the consumer decision making process by making social influence quantifiable and providing access to more information. Consumers can find product information, check reviews from other users, compare options, and be offered personalization and see what other consumers have to say about the products before making the decision to buy. The major constructs reviewed in this paper are listed in Table I with each digital cue mapped to a possible mechanism for purchase intention.

Table I Digital Marketing Constructs and Purchase-Intention Mechanisms

Construct	Main Digital Cue	Purchase-Intention Mechanism
Content quality	Useful, clear, timely content	Awareness, value, reduced uncertainty
Social engagement	Likes, comments, shares, community	Participation and brand closeness
eWOM and reviews	Ratings, reviews, testimonials	Social proof and risk reduction
Influencer credibility	Expertise, fit, authenticity	Trust transfer and favorable attitude
Personalization	Recommendations, retargeting, offers	Relevance, convenience, reminder effect

• Social Media Marketing and Engagement

Social media marketing can enhance consumer interaction, entertainment value, consumer equity, and brand awareness. Kim and Ko discovered that social media marketing actions in the luxury fashion context have positive relationships with value equity, relationship equity, brand equity and purchase intention [4]. Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi found that social media marketing media have an impact on brand loyalty and intention to buy for Generation Y consumers [5]. In addition, Duffett proved that the attitudes and behavioral intentions of young consumers can be influenced by social media marketing communications [14]. As digital marketing is participatory, engagement is a key mechanism. People can like, comment, share, review, subscribe, co-create content. These actions mean that consumers' exposure to brand cues is enhanced and that they feel closer to brands. Hollebeek and Macky define engagement, trust, and value as the key elements of consumers' response as a result of digital content marketing [11].

• eWOM, Online Reviews, and Trust

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is a one of the influencing digital mechanisms, as it conveys perceived experience from consumers to other potential consumers. Erkan and Evans attributed the role of information quality, credibility, usefulness and adoption as determining factors for the influence of eWOM on purchase intention on social media [6]. There are four factors involved in eWOM: the

message, the communicator, the receiver, and the response [7]. Online reviews can help alleviate uncertainty by giving experiential evidence that is generally seen as more independent than when it comes from the company itself. Yet, eWOM can also have negative impacts when reviews are inconclusive, seem fake, or have extreme opinions. Therefore, perceived credibility, valence and relevance of eWOM significantly influence purchase intention. For some items, like electronics, travel, clothing, or restaurant services, the reviews are more of an alternative to a visit.

- **Influencer Credibility and Personalization**

The concept of influencer marketing is an extension of digital marketing beyond the brand-to-consumer communication to person mediated persuasion. Vrontis et al. highlight the importance of the element of credibility, authenticity, identification, and engagement on the part of the consumer as key factors in the area of research on influencer marketing [12]. Lim et al. determined that social media influencers influence purchase intention and that attitude plays a mediating role between social media influencers and purchase intention [15]. So, a sort of a trust-transfer is made from influencer to brand, which increases the credibility of the seller. Therefore, influencer credibility acts as a trust-transfer mechanism from influencer to brand, thus enhancing the credibility of the seller. Digital marketing also has an element of personalization. Personalized advertising can raise the level of relevance and convenience, but can also raise privacy concerns. Aguirre et al. describe the personalization paradox, in which the positive effect of relevance may be weakened when data collection reduces trust [13]. Thus, personalization is expected to strengthen purchase intention only when consumers perceive that the brand uses data transparently and respectfully.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

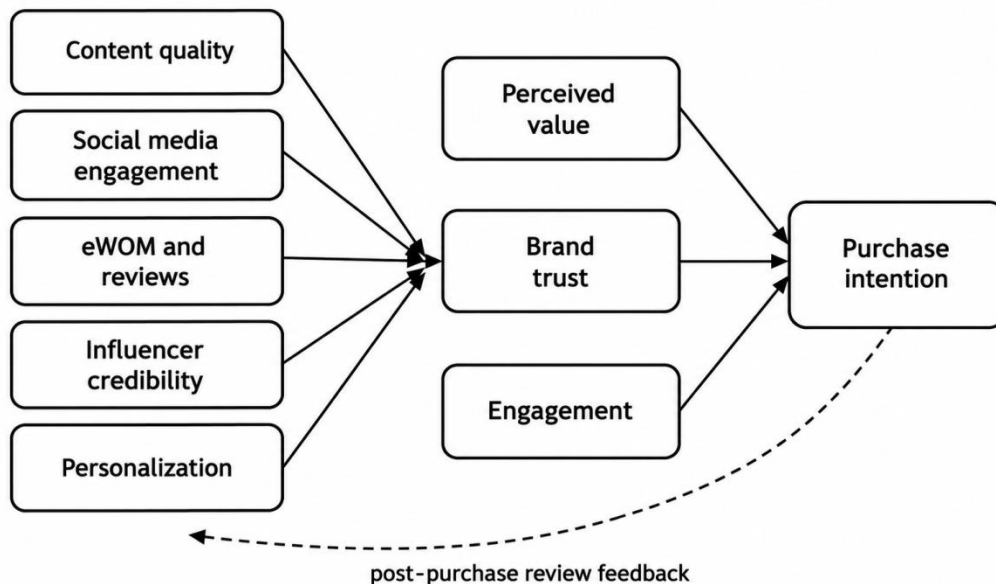


Fig. 1: Proposed conceptual framework linking digital marketing dimensions to purchase intention through perceived value, brand trust, and engagement.

Based on this, the conceptual framework in Fig. 1 suggests that digital marketing can affect purchase intention through three mediating factors: perceived value, brand trust and consumer engagement. When digital marketing can save time in information search, offer valuable information and clearly convey product benefits, it helps to reinforce perceived value. It's easier for users to believe in reviews, influencer messages, brand responses and privacy policies when they seem authentic and uniform. When consumers interact with the brand content and brand conversation it fosters engaged consumers. This framework aligns with theory of planned behavior which explains that digital marketing affects attitudes toward the product, subjective norms from peers and influencers, and perceived

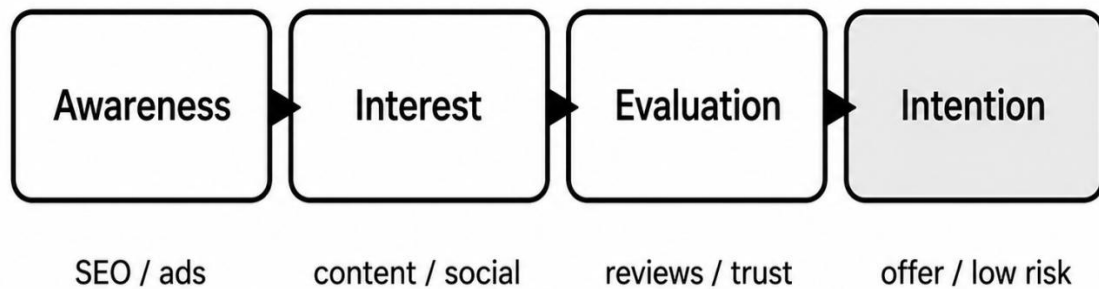
behavioral control because of the ease of access and availability of information [3]. This is also aligned with the digital marketing research, which considers the consumer journey a system of dynamic touchpoints rather than one advertising exposure [1]. The hypotheses that came out of the framework are summarized in Table II.

Table II: proposed Hypotheses

Hyp.	Statement
H1	Content quality and search visibility positively affect perceived value.
H2	Social media engagement positively affects engagement and brand trust.
H3	eWOM credibility positively affects brand trust and perceived risk reduction.
H4	Influencer credibility positively affects brand attitude and purchase intention.
H5	Personalization positively affects purchase intention when privacy trust is high.
H6	Perceived value, brand trust, and engagement positively affect purchase intention.

The hypotheses to be tested here attempt to capture both direct and indirect effects. For instance, attitude might be changed directly by content quality, but its effect is likely to be stronger via perceived value. Likewise, eWOM credibility can lead to engagement in brand trust and/or risk elimination prior to intention. The difference is significant because often digital campaigns are optimized for exposure and not for believability and usefulness.

Interactive digital consumer path



Trust, relevance, convenience, and social proof move consumers forward

Fig. 2: Digital marketing funnel showing how online touchpoints move consumers from awareness to purchase intention.

Purchase intention is a series of touchpoints as illustrated in Fig. 2. Visibility via search or paid media may generate awareness, and content marketing and social media may generate interest. Evaluation is enhanced by reviews and trust cues, while tailored offers or reminders can help get consumers closer to action. Thus, the model proposes that digital marketing be measured as a total consumer journey instead of channel-based performance measurement. The framework also acknowledges the two-way nature of the digital influence. Once purchased, customers can leave reviews, share experiences, or produce UGC. These post-purchase signals feedback in to the information environment and effect the next group of potential consumers. It is a result of this that consumer purchase intention is influenced by the sum of the digital ecosystem created around the brand, rather than just one message from the brand itself.

Methodology for Empirical Testing

A cross sectional consumer survey can be carried out to test the proposed framework empirically. The key audiences should be consumers who have recently been searching for, evaluating, or buying products online. Digital marketing exposure, value perceived, brand trust, engagement, attitude, privacy concern and purchase intention can be measured with a structured questionnaire with a five-point or seven-point Likert scale. Table III offers a measurement and analysis plan which can be customized for a product category.

Table III: Measurement and Analysis Plan

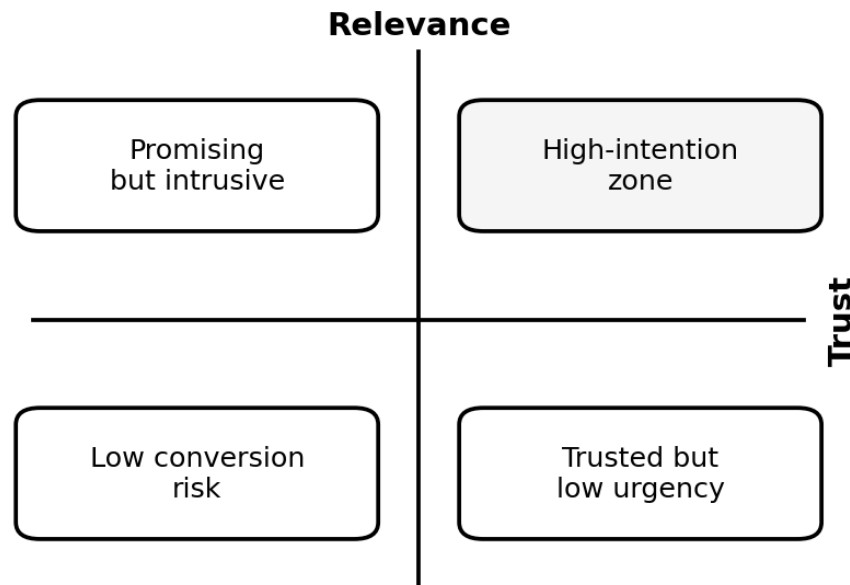
Variable	Sample Indicators	Analysis Role
Content quality	Useful, complete, relevant	Exogenous predictor
eWOM credibility	Review credibility, rating trust	Exogenous predictor
Influencer credibility	Expertise, authenticity, fit	Exogenous predictor
Brand trust	Honesty, reliability, data confidence	Mediator
Purchase intention	Likelihood, choice, recommendation	Outcome
Privacy concern	Data discomfort, tracking concern	Moderator

Cronbach alpha and composite reliability can be utilized in analysis to investigate the reliability. Factor loading and average variance extracted can be used to measure convergent validity. Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratio may be used to test for discriminant validity. Then, the direct, indirect and moderating effects between constructs can be estimated using structural equation modeling. The latter is consistent with previous empirical research in the fields of digital marketing, social media marketing and eWOM research [4]-[9]. Demographic and behavioral factors like age, gender, income, education, digital shopping frequency, product category and level of involvement should be controlled in the empirical design. The importance of product involvement is due to the fact that whenever the product is high in involvement such as financial services or electronics, more information search and more trust is needed, while low involvement products can be affected by convenience, promotion, and social cues. There's also a platform difference that's worth taking note of since consumers are seeing different types of information when they search on search engines, short-form video platforms, eCommerce platforms, and their brand websites.

A survey conducted with consumers who have engaged with digital marketing in the past three months, sampled using purposive sampling, could be used in a future study. Questions on the screen should verify recent exposure to online advertisements, social media brand posts, e-commerce reviews, or influencer posts. The questionnaire should not ask the respondent to assess digital marketing on a general level, but should target them to remember a recent product search or interaction with a brand. This makes the answers more valid and lessens memory bias. Procedural changes to decrease common method bias include separating predictor and outcome items, ensuring anonymity, ensuring clear wording, and randomizing scale items. The statistical remedies may involve Harman single factor analysis and marker variables. These techniques do not remove all bias but increase the confidence that observed relationships are not a result of the measurement technique alone.

Discussion

According to the review, the purchase intention is most strongly influenced by the use of digital marketing if it carries out three functions. It enhances the value of information, to enable consumers to locate, comprehend and compare products. Search marketing and content marketing and website experience help in reducing uncertainty and perceived usefulness, hence they are relevant [1] [2]. Second, social validation is generated via reviews, communities, and influencers as a result of digital marketing. This validation can help to increase consumer trust in the claims of the brand and they will be more inclined to buy the brand. This validation can help to increase the consumer's confidence in the claims of the brand and the consumers will be more inclined to purchase the brand. Third, digital marketing boosts relevance by personalisation, retargeting, and data-based segmentation without compromising trust, if privacy is not a problem [13].



Digital marketing performs best when relevance and trust are both high.

Fig. 3: Trust-relevance matrix explaining why digital marketing produces stronger purchase intention when both personalization relevance and brand trust are high.

The need for personalization alone to be ineffective is explained by the trust-relevance matrix in Fig. 3. However, even if the message is relevant and informative, it can be unsuccessful if the consumer feels that the brand is intrusive, or that the brand is careless in privacy matters. On the other hand, a trusted brand can backfire if it isn't relevant or if it's the wrong time. The high intention zone is when the consumers perceive the message as useful and also trust that the brand is credible, transparent and respectful. The framework also suggests that the goal of purchase intention is not likely to be achieved through a single digital exposure. Rather, the intentionality arises from the repeated contacts over platforms. For instance, a consumer can search for a brand, see product demos on social media, read reviews about the products and then reply to a personalized offer. This sequence breaks down why marketers need to embed digital channels into their campaigns – not as standalone activities. This awareness campaign may not be successful in moving interest to intention, if it isn't credible from a review or trustworthy from a website.

One of the other important findings is that agency grows in the digital realm. Consumers are not passive actors who are simply being pushed around by ads; they can compare, block, comment, share, complain and publicly rate brands. This is because one group may be motivated to act positively while another is motivated to resist. Relevancy, consistency, transparency and quality of responses, throughout the customer journey, are the key factors in digital marketing success. Research-wise, this discussion puts forward the idea that there is a need to move away from channel-centred evaluation to mechanism-centred evaluation. Rather than asking, "Which is the most effective?," researchers should ask, "How does each channel increase perceived value, perceived trust, engagement, and perceived control? This point is why varying channels can yield the same effect in doing the same psychological service.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This paper theoretically extends consumer purchase intention literature by combining the elements of digital marketing with the mediators from consumer behavior theory. The framework incorporates the theory of planned behaviour and relates the touchpoints of digital marketing to the relationships between attitude, norm, and perceived control of the digital content, social proof and

platform convenience [3]. It also emphasizes the role of trust as the key mechanism that connects eWOM, influencer credibility, personalization, and intention. In practice, the paper recommends that digital marketers create campaigns that focus on building trust, relevance, and engagement. Content should be answering consumer questions; social media should be used to not just provide visibility to the consumer but actually encourage interaction; eWOM should be monitored and responded to ethically; influencers need to be picked for credibility and product fit; and personalization must be transparent so as to not fall into the negative aspect of the personalization paradox [13], [15]. Table IV shows the most important guidelines for managers that were synthesized from the framework.

Table IV: Managerial Guidelines for Improving Purchase Intention

Managerial Area	Recommended Action	Expected Response
Content	Answer common questions and show product value	Higher perceived usefulness
Social media	Encourage interaction and respond quickly	Stronger engagement and trust
Reviews	Monitor eWOM and resolve complaints visibly	Lower perceived risk
Influencers	Select credible creators with product fit	More believable persuasion
Personalization	Explain data use and limit intrusive retargeting	Relevance without privacy resistance

The managerial implications of the study include the suggestions that the firms need to consider measuring the performance of digital marketing not just based on impressions or clicks, but also on the outcomes that contribute to building brand trust and value for the customers and the integrated marketing performance [16]. Measures that can be valuable are engagement quality, review sentiment, content usefulness, response speed, bounce rate, abandoned cart behavior, and conversion assist contribution. Managers can use the constructs in Table IV to match digital tactics with consumer psychology, in addition to platform metrics. The framework also takes into account the needs of small and medium sized enterprises. Smaller businesses might not have the budget to push the ad as much as they would like, but they can demonstrate that they have a great product to offer by consistently providing content, communicating with service, showing honest reviews from customers, and responding to them promptly, which will all lead to a greater increase in purchase intention. Lots of categories will allow for volume of advertising to be replaced by credibility and responsiveness. So, when used in the context of digital marketing, it can lower barriers of entry if companies can establish trust and prove value.

Limitations and Future Research

The drawbacks of this paper are its conceptual nature and the lack of primary empirical finding. The model needs to be subjected to further testing in different product categories, age groups, cultural contexts, and platform contexts. Review credibility is more influential on high-involvement purchases while personalisation and influencer cues are more influential on low involvement purchases, for instance. Longitudinal studies can also investigate whether digital marketing leads to real conversion (purchase) after impacting intent. Experimental designs are suggested for further studies, which would compare the impact of the different sources of content: organic content, paid content, influencer content, and eWOM content. The path to privacy and algorithmic transparency is another significant research trajectory since consumers increasingly are aware that digital messages are personalized and data-driven. The knowledge of how transparency would impact trust will be crucial to responsible digital marketing. Artificial Intelligence based recommendation systems, chatbot interactions, live commerce, short-form video and social commerce communities are other possible digital marketing contexts that can be explored through future studies. The model may also be applied in a business to business or in a service setting. Longer business-to-business purchase cycles, more decision makers, and greater perceived risk can influence business-to-business intention. For services, purchase intention can be more related to reviews, service recovery, employee interactions, and credibility cues. Such settings can enhance the role of trust as a mediator and diminish the direct effect of the short-term motivational incentives.

Ethical and Responsible Digital Marketing

Digital marketing also has an impact on purchase intention, which also brings ethical questions. Marketers need to strike the right balance between the art of persuasion and privacy, transparency and

consumer autonomy when using the tools of digital campaigns to track consumer browsing behavior, make inferences of consumer preferences, and target consumers at specific moments. If the consumer feels that a brand has violated a privacy line, the message may not be relevant anymore, with a subsequent decrease in trust and less intention [13]. Digital marketing practices must be transparent, promotional and authentic to meet responsible standards. This is particularly important when it comes to influencer marketing, where followers may feel like they are getting a personal suggestion instead of a paid promotion. Thus, authenticity and disclosure need to be considered not just as compliance but as strategic trust factors as well [12], [15]. Click baits like dark patterns, misleading scarcity messaging, exaggerated countdown timers and personalisation can lead to short term clicks, but a longer-term reduction in purchase intent. If the consumers get deceived, they tend to give negative eWOM, lower repeat purchasing intention and refrain from further involvement. It further highlights the fact that a digital marketing success should be judged based on the acceptable results that have been achieved in the long run, as opposed to results that have been achieved in the short run. Good implementation is also critical to algorithmic targeting. However, recommendation systems can limit consumer choice and perceptions of control if they repeatedly present consumers with limited product choices or targeted messages that are skewed. Future studies could investigate the nature of algorithmic transparency, consent mechanisms, and opt-out features as factors that impact trust and purchase intent in personalized digital settings.

Conclusion

This paper explored the role of digital marketing on purchase intention and put forward a framework between the dimensions of digital marketing, perceived value, brand trust, engagement and purchase intention. Content quality, social media engagement, eWOM credibility, influencer credibility, and personalization can positively affect purchase intention when these generate useful information, social proof, trust, and relevance, as indicated by the discussion. The framework also illustrates that digital marketing is a two-way street; it is not a communication process, it is a journey that the consumer goes on with the marketer. The framework offers hypotheses to test and a measurement plan for future empirical testing for researchers. For practitioners, it demonstrates that digital marketing is a process that needs to be integrated with trust-building. When a message is visible, but not useful, relevant but not trusted, or persuasive but not transparent, it does become intention. Empirical studies can be used to test and identify which digital marketing mechanisms drive conversion from attention to purchase intention in various markets and in various consumer segments to help future studies identify which are the most effective.

References

1. Kannan, P. K., & Li, H. A. (2017). Digital marketing: A framework, review and research agenda. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 34(1), 22-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2016.11.006>
2. Tiago, M. T. P. M. B., & Verissimo, J. M. C. (2014). Digital marketing and social media: Why bother? *Business Horizons*, 57(6), 703-708. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.07.002>
3. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
4. Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1480-1486. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014>
5. Balakrishnan, B. K. P. D., Dahnli, M. I., & Yi, W. J. (2014). The impact of social media marketing medium toward purchase intention and brand loyalty among Generation Y. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 177-185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.032>
6. Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption. *International Journal of Information Management*, 36(1), 47-55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.11.007>
7. Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461-470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008>

8. Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2017). Measuring consumer perception of social media marketing activities in e-commerce industry: Scale development and validation. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 1294-1307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.06.001>
9. Dehghani, M., & Tumer, M. (2015). A research on effectiveness of Facebook advertising on enhancing purchase intention of consumers. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 49, 597-600. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.03.051>
10. Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S., & Fuller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: The case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(5/6), 342-351. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-05-2013-0299>
11. Hollebeek, L. D., & Macky, K. (2019). Digital content marketing role in fostering consumer engagement, trust, and value: Framework, fundamental propositions, and implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 45, 27-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.07.003>
12. Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 617-644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12647>
13. Aguirre, E., Mahr, D., Grewal, D., de Ruyter, K., & Wetzels, M. (2015). Unraveling the personalization paradox: The effect of information collection and trust-building strategies on online advertisement effectiveness. *Journal of Retailing*, 91(1), 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2014.09.005>
14. Duffett, R. G. (2017). Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers attitudes. *Young Consumers*, 18(1), 19-39. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-07-2016-00622>
15. Lim, X. J., Radzol, A. R. M., Cheah, J.-H., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2), 19-36.
16. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.

