CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE DIGITAL MARKETING WORLD: AN ANALYSIS OF TRUST, SOCIAL INFLUENCE, AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20440852

Abstract. *This article examines consumer buying behavior in the digital marketing world with emphasis on trust, social influence, and purchase intention. Using a qualitative conceptual design based on systematic literature review, the study focused on digital marketing, social media marketing, online consumer behavior, and platform-mediated decision-making. The findings show that digital marketing influences buying behavior most strongly when consumers encounter relevant content, trusted digital environments, and positive peer signals (Antczak, 2024; Shukri et al., 2025). Personalized marketing and social media engagement can strengthen purchase intention, but these effects are moderated by privacy concerns, authenticity, and platform credibility (Li et al., 2021; Klein & Ford, 2021). The article concludes that consumer buying behavior in digital environments is a digitally mediated decision process in which trust and social validation remain central to online purchase outcomes.*

Keywords: *consumer buying behavior, digital marketing, online trust, social media marketing, purchase intention*

1. Introduction

Consumer buying behavior has changed rapidly as digital technologies now shape how individuals search for product information, compare alternatives, and make purchase decisions. Social media, e-commerce platforms, mobile applications, and personalized advertising have made digital interaction central to the contemporary decision process (Antczak, 2024; Kemp, 2023). Instead of relying mainly on firm-generated messages, consumers increasingly evaluate brands through reviews, online communities, influencer content, and algorithmically curated recommendations.

Recent scholarship suggests that digital marketing influences not only awareness but also trust formation, emotional engagement, and intention to buy. Social media marketing, content interaction, and peer-generated evaluations affect how consumers interpret value and credibility before they purchase (Shukri et al., 2025; Khan & Bhutto, 2023). At the same time, artificial intelligence and personalization technologies have improved message relevance, but they have also increased concern about privacy and surveillance (Li et al., 2021; West, 2020).

Despite these developments, the literature remains fragmented across social media influence, trust, personalization, and digital purchase intention. This article therefore examines how digital marketing reshapes consumer buying behavior and identifies the major recent mechanisms that strengthen or weaken online purchase decisions.

Aim of the article. The aim of this article is to examine how digital marketing influences consumer buying behavior through trust, social influence, and personalized digital interaction.

Research objectives.

The objectives of this article are to:

1. Analyse how digital marketing affects consumer information search and purchase intention.
2. Examine the role of trust, privacy, and platform credibility in digital purchase decisions.
3. Explore how social media and peer influence shape consumer evaluation and buying behavior.
4. Develop a concise conceptual explanation of recent consumer buying behavior in digital environments.

Research questions.

Based on these objectives, the article addresses the following research questions:

1. How does digital marketing influence consumer buying behavior in online environments?
2. Which recent digital factors most strongly affect trust and purchase intention?
3. How do social media marketing and peer influence shape consumer evaluation and buying decisions?
4. What factors weaken the influence of digital marketing on purchase behavior?

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative conceptual design supported by systematic literature review. This approach is suitable for integrating recent studies from digital marketing, e-commerce, and online consumer behavior (Antczak, 2024; Shukri et al., 2025). The source base consisted of scholarly materials published from 2020 onward, selected for their relevance to trust, social influence, personalization, and digital purchase intention.

Sources were screened according to publication period, conceptual relevance, and contribution to understanding digitally mediated buying behavior. The analysis identified recurring themes related to information accessibility, electronic word of mouth, trust, privacy, and platform usability (Li et al., 2021; Klein & Ford, 2021). These themes were synthesized to explain how digital marketing affects consumer evaluation and intention across online touchpoints.

3. Results

The analysis shows that digital marketing affects consumer buying behavior first by improving access to market information. Consumers can compare products, read reviews, monitor promotions, and engage with branded content quickly across multiple platforms (Kemp, 2023; Antczak, 2024). This convenience shortens the path from awareness to purchase, but it also makes credibility and trust more important.

A second result is that trust remains the strongest mediator of online purchase intention. Consumers respond more positively when digital platforms appear secure, transparent, and reliable, while poor privacy assurance or misleading content increases hesitation (Klein & Ford, 2021; Antczak, 2024). Thus, the effectiveness of digital marketing depends not only on visibility but also on the level of consumer confidence in the platform and brand.

The findings also show that social influence has a major effect on digital buying behavior. Reviews, influencer recommendations, comments, and online engagement shape perceptions of product quality and brand trustworthiness, especially when direct product inspection is not possible (Shukri et al., 2025; Khan & Bhutto, 2023). Positive peer signals strengthen purchase intention, whereas negative or suspicious signals can rapidly reduce it.

Another important result is that personalization increases digital marketing effectiveness when relevance is balanced with legitimacy. AI-supported recommendations and tailored content improve convenience and engagement, but they can also trigger resistance if consumers perceive them as

intrusive (Li et al., 2021; West, 2020). This shows that personalization works best when it is useful, transparent, and ethically managed.

4. Discussion

The results suggest that consumer buying behavior in the digital marketing world is best understood as a trust-based and socially influenced process. Digital marketing operates not merely as promotion but as a broader behavioral environment in which content relevance, peer validation, and platform design jointly influence consumer decisions (Antczak, 2024; Shukri et al., 2025). This helps explain why high digital exposure does not always produce purchase.

The findings also indicate that social media marketing has become especially influential because it combines brand communication with visible social proof. Consumers often use comments, reviews, and influencer narratives as decision shortcuts when uncertainty is high (Khan & Bhutto, 2023). At the same time, the tension between personalization and privacy shows that technological sophistication alone does not guarantee positive outcomes; trust and ethical communication remain essential (Li et al., 2021; Klein & Ford, 2021).

5. Conclusion

This article examined consumer buying behavior in the digital marketing world using a recent based conceptual approach. The analysis shows that digital marketing most strongly influences buying behavior when relevant content, trust, convenience, and positive social signals work together in an integrated online environment (Antczak, 2024; Klein & Ford, 2021). Social media engagement, personalized communication, and peer-generated information are important drivers of purchase intention, but their impact depends on authenticity, privacy assurance, and consumer confidence.

The article concludes that consumer buying behavior in digital settings is dynamic, socially mediated, and highly dependent on trust. Digital marketing shapes not only what consumers see, but also how they evaluate and act on that information (Li et al., 2021; West, 2020). Future empirical research may examine how these relationships differ across product categories, age groups, and digital platforms.

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