



## Understanding Purchase Intention in the Social Media Era: A Systematic Literature Review of Social Media Marketing, eWOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust

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### ABSTRACT

Understanding purchase intention in the digital era requires a comprehensive analysis of various marketing communication and psychological factors that shape consumer decisions. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of purchase intention through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach by examining the relationship between electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Social Media Marketing (SMM), brand image, and brand trust as key determinants. The literature search process was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines using Scopus, Emerald Insight, Elsevier, Google Scholar, and Cogen Business & Management databases with a publication period of 2010–2025. Of the total 150 articles identified, 20 articles met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed descriptively and thematically. The review results show that eWOM and SMM consistently have a positive effect on purchase intention, both directly and indirectly. Brand image and brand trust play a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between digital communication and consumer purchase intention. The findings also indicate that digital platform characteristics, user demographics, industry context, and information quality also influence the strength of the relationship between variables. This study provides an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of purchase intention formation in the digital marketing environment and offers directions for further research related to the exploration of psychological and technological variables that are increasingly relevant to modern consumer behavior

## INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the way consumers search for information, interact with brands, and make purchasing decisions. In the digital era, consumer behavior has changed along with the increasing use of social media as the main source of information before selecting products or services. The era of digitalization allows customers and businesses to communicate with each other instantly and more openly. Users can share information and their experiences with goods and services through digital platforms such as community forums, marketplaces, and social media. This change in behavior patterns shows a shift from one-way communication, for example between businesses and consumers, to two-way communication that focuses on customer cooperation and participation (Qadri, Sinambela & Ana, 2023), a phenomenon that has given rise to a form of electronic marketing communication known as word of mouth or EWOM.

EWOM occupies a strategic position in the decision-making process in the digital age. EWOM is an activity that spreads opinions, suggestions, and reviews about goods online through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and e-commerce forums. EWOM comes from real customers who have direct experience with the product, so it is considered more credible than conventional promotions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). EWOM is not only informational but also emotional and narrative, capable of creating psychological closeness that strongly influences purchase intent. This authentic information greatly influences consumers' purchase intentions because it often becomes the main reference before they make a purchase. This is in line with the opinion of Ngo et al. (2024), who emphasize that the reliability and credibility of information sources in EWOM play an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions of brands. Furthermore, Qadri et al. (2023) show that the effect of EWOM on purchase intention can occur directly or indirectly through *brand image* and *brand trust* as mediating variables. According to research conducted by Waskita & Setyaning (2025) in the context of local brands or industries involving Gen Z, the combination of EWOM, *brand image*, and *brand trust* contributes to *purchase intention*. The results of the study show that younger customers are more responsive to online recommendations and brand image that appears on social media. This indicates that trust in the brand can be the key to the success of digital marketing strategies in attracting the buying interest of the younger generation.

On the other hand, the growth of the digital ecosystem has also encouraged companies to invest in digital marketing strategies based on *Social Media Marketing* (SMM). SMM encompasses various activities, ranging from visual content, storytelling, interactive promotions, to collaborations with content creators, utilizing various social media platforms that enable companies to interact directly with consumers. SMM plays a strategic role as a means for companies to build emotional relationships with their audience, strengthen *their brand image*, and foster *brand trust*, which will ultimately increase the intention to purchase (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Ramadhani, 2024). Variations between platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or marketplaces can also influence the effectiveness of SMM strategies. For example, TikTok uses short

video content with a different persuasion pattern compared to Instagram, which emphasizes aesthetic visuals. The fast-paced, visual, and interactive nature of social media deeply influences consumer perceptions, which in turn affects their intention to purchase products.

Social media now serves not only as a promotional tool, but also as a space for interaction that brings together the emotional values of brands with the psychological needs of consumers. The emotional connection and trust built through SMM directly catalyze eWOM. When brands succeed in creating strong *brand trust* and *brand image* through social media interaction, this encourages consumers to voluntarily share their positive experiences through eWOM on various digital platforms. Thus, the findings of Fakriyah & Abdurrahman (2024), which state that SMM has a positive influence on *purchase intention* with the mediation of *brand trust* and *brand image*, further demonstrate that brand digital marketing efforts create a fertile environment for the spread of eWOM, which ultimately influences the purchase intentions of other consumers. Research conducted by Meliawati et al. (2023) also explains that SMM significantly influences *purchase intention*. Previous literature has also confirmed that SMM consistently influences purchase intention, both directly and through mediating variables (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017; Alalwan, 2018). Engaging, creative, and interactive SMM activities can create positive experiences that attract consumers to generate purchase intent.

However, even though many empirical studies have been conducted and support the relationship between EWOM, SMM, Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention, the local context and specific demographics are still areas that need more attention. Cultural variations, differences in social media platform preferences, and varying levels of digital literacy can affect how EWOM and SMM work in influencing consumer purchase intentions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Therefore, a more systematic mapping is needed to understand the extent to which variables such as *brand image* and *brand trust* play a role in this relationship. Different results also show that contextual factors such as product type, audience demographics, and frequency of social media use greatly influence the strength of the relationship between variables. Therefore, to find patterns and inconsistencies in previous research results, a comprehensive and systematic analysis is needed.

Based on these conditions, this study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of purchase intention through a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach. Following the PRISMA guidelines for Systematic Literature Reviews ( ), this study aims to identify the main factors that influence purchase intention in the context of digital marketing, analyze the role of EWOM and SMM as drivers of purchase intention, evaluate the mediating functions of brand trust and brand image, and map research trends and future research opportunities related to digital consumer behavior. This SLR is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of purchase intention and theoretical contributions to the literature on digital consumer behavior, as well as practical implications for businesses in designing more effective marketing strategies.

**METHODS**

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method used in this study refers to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, which aim to examine the factors *that determine purchase intention* in a digital context, specifically *Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Image, and Brand Trust*. This method was chosen because it can provide a comprehensive overview of research trends, empirical findings, and gaps in existing research (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). In this study, the research data was obtained from 20 articles published in international journals from Scopus, Cogen Business & Management, Emerald Insight, Elvier, and Google Scholar with a publication period between 2010 and 2025. The research context covered the e-commerce, tourism, education, and consumer product sectors. The keywords used to facilitate the search were formulated with relevant Boolean operators ("electronic word of mouth" OR "eWOM") AND ("social media marketing" OR "SMM") AND ("brand image") AND ("brand trust") AND ("purchase intention"). The search focused on English-language articles published between 2010 and 2025 that were relevant to current developments in digital and social media.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

In determining the literature used, the researcher applied the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Categories	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Type	Scientific articles published in Scopus-indexed, peer-reviewed journals	Conferences, books, dissertations, and non-scientific reports
Language	Articles in English	Non-English articles
Publication period	2010–2025	Before 2010
Focus Topics	EWOM, SMM, Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention in the context of social media or digital consumers	Other variables outside of those related to purchase intention that are not relevant to the context of social media
Availability	The article is fully accessible (full text)	Only abstract or summary available

**Literature Screening Process (PRISMA Flow)**

The screening process follows the four stages of PRISMA, namely:

1. Identification: From the literature search process using a predetermined keyword database, 150 articles were found.
2. Screening: at this stage, duplication was eliminated using Mendeley, resulting in 87 relevant and unique articles

3. Feasibility: Next, at this stage, an evaluation of the titles, abstracts, and full texts found 34 articles that were relevant to the topic.
4. Inclusion: Finally, 20 articles that met all the criteria were included in the final analysis.

### **Article Extraction And Quality Assessment**

Each article is analyzed based on elements such as author and year of publication, country or research context, social media platform studied, methodology and analytical approach, research variables and theoretical models used, key findings, and practical implications. Quality assessment is conducted by considering data completeness, consistency, methodology, model suitability for research objectives, and validity of findings.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis in this study was conducted using two approaches, namely descriptive analysis and thematic analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to map research trends, including the distribution of publication years, research methods used, countries of origin, and types of digital platforms studied. Descriptive analysis was used to help understand the development of research related to purchase intention in the digital era. Thematic analysis was conducted by identifying patterns that have a relationship or influence on purchase intention, which were divided into four parts, namely:

1. Relationship/Influence of EWOM and Purchase Intention
2. Relationship/Influence of SMM and Purchase Intention
3. The Role of Brand Image in Purchase Intention
4. The Role of Brand Trust in Purchase Intention

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Research Overview**

Based on a literature search of various databases (Scopus, Cogen Business & Management, Emerald Insight, Elvier), 34 articles relevant to the research theme were obtained. After going through a selection process in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 20 main articles were obtained and analyzed in depth. In this study, the research literature data sources were collected from the e-commerce, tourism, education, and consumer product sectors in various developing countries, namely Indonesia, India, Egypt, and Turkey, as well as several countries in Eastern Europe and East Asia.

Distribution of research methodologies from various sources that have been analyzed shows that around 90% of studies use a quantitative approach using SEM analysis techniques, regression analysis, and path analysis. Meanwhile, 5% use qualitative analysis with in-depth interviews and the remaining 5% use systematic literature reviews to explore the influence of EWOM and Social Media Marketing on *purchase intention* with *brand trust* and *brand image*. The diversity of research methodologies used shows that the research topics discussed have a strong empirical basis and are open to further conceptual exploration. On the other hand, the *purchase intention* variable is a cross-sector phenomenon influenced by the characteristics of digital platforms and the behavior of social

media users. The following are the results of an in-depth analysis of the literature search findings:

Table 2. Research Overview

No	Researcher (Year)	Article Title	Research Method	Brief Analysis Results
1	Singh Bais et al. (2018)	Impact of eWOM on Brand Image and Purchase Intention	Systematic Literature Review	eWOM has a significant impact on brand image and purchase intention; the majority of studies are non-empirical.
2	Nyagadza et al. (2023)	Examining the influence of social media eWOM on consumers' purchase intentions of commercialised indigenous fruits (IFs) products in FMCGs retailers	PLS-SEM, Mediation	The quality and credibility of eWOM increase purchase intention through information usefulness and adoption.
3	Yusuf et al. (2018)	Influence of e-WOM engagement on consumer purchase intention in social commerce	SEM-AMOS	eWOM engagement, credibility, and innovation have a significant effect on purchase intention.
4	Erkan & Evans (2018)	Social media or shopping websites? The influence of eWOM on consumers' online purchase intentions	Thematic Analysis	Anonymous reviews on shopping sites are more influential than social media eWOM.
5	Manzoor et al. (2020)	Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer's Purchase Intentions: The Mediating role of Customer Trust, International Journal of	Regression (SPSS)	SMM & brand trust have a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

		Entrepreneurial Research		
6	Pandey et al. (2018)	Social media marketing impact on the purchase intention of millennials	MANOVA, Regression	eWOM, attitude toward advertising, peer communication influence millennials' purchase intention.
7	Jalilvand (2012)	The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention, Emerald Journal	SEM-AMOS	eWOM → brand image & purchase intention; brand image strongly mediates.
8	Deepa et al. (2025)	Digital era: the effect of electronic word of mouth, online communities, and online advertising on brand image and loyalty,	Linear Regression	eWOM improves brand image & loyalty; online ads influence purchase decisions.
9	Marziqah & Albari (2023)	The Influence of eWOM and Brand Image on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Consumers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta	PLS-SEM	eWOM, brand image, and brand trust significantly increase purchase intention for Mixue.
10	Sari et al. (2021)	The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-Wom) and Brand Image on Repurchase Intention Moderated by Brand Trust in the Garuda Indonesia Airline	Path Analysis	All relationships are significant; brand trust mediates eWOM & brand image on repurchase intention.

11	Tatar & Erdogmus (2016)	The effect of social media marketing on brand trust and brand loyalty for hotels, Inf Technol Tourism	SEM	SMM → brand trust → brand loyalty; trust is the primary mediator.
12	Sohail et al. (2020)	The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty: An Arab Perspective	SEM	SMM has a significant effect on brand trust & loyalty through community, interaction, and entertainment.
13	Aghekyan-Simonian et al. (2012)	The role of product brand image and online store image on perceived risks and online purchase intentions for apparel	SEM	Brand image reduces perceived risk and increases purchase intention.
14	Husain et al. (2022)	The Impact of Brand Equity, Status Consumption, and Brand Trust on Purchase Intention of Luxury Brands	Regression	Brand equity, SMM, status consumption, and brand trust influence purchase intention.
15	Evgeniy et al. (2019)	The Effect of eWOM on Purchase Intention for Korean-brand Cars in Russia: The Mediating Role of Brand Image and Perceived Quality	SEM-AMOS	eWOM is significant → purchase intention; brand image & perceived quality as mediators.
16	Ezzat & Abd El Salam (2022)	Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention:	CFA, Path Analysis	Significant eWOM → brand image, brand trust & purchase intention; both are strong mediators.

		Mediating Role of Brand Image and Brand Trust of Tourist Destinations and Hospitality Establishments in Egypt		
17	Tafolli et al. (2024)	The impact of electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention through brand image and brand trust in the fashion industry: evidence from a developing country	SEM-AMOS	eWOM does not directly influence PI; it must go through brand image & trust.
18	Salhab et al. (2023)	The impact of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand trust and image	PLS-SEM	SMM → brand image & trust; brand image mediates, brand trust does not; eWOM does not moderate.
19	Ali & Naushad (2023)	Examining the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention: The mediating role of brand image	SEM-AMOS	SMM → brand image; brand image → PI; SMM does not directly affect PI.
20	Soleimani et al. (2023)	The Role of Brand Trust and Brand Attitude in the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention	Path Analysis	SMM → brand trust & attitude → PI; SMM does not directly influence PI without mediation.

## **2. The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) on Purchase Intention**

A thematic analysis of 20 articles analyzed in depth shows that *electronic word of mouth* (EWOM) is the most consistent determinant in shaping purchase intention. Most articles report that review quality, source credibility, information relevance, and message tone (positive/negative) greatly influence consumer perceptions of a product or brand. Several key findings from the articles show that (1) the credibility and relevance of reviews directly contribute to increased consumer confidence, (2) consumers trust evaluations based on real experiences more than commercial promotional messages, and (3) EWOM functions as social proof, i.e., it reinforces purchasing decisions through social evidence and collective experiences.

The thematic analysis conducted shows that all information shared by consumers or customers on social media and e-commerce platforms gives a positive impression that can influence their intention to purchase a product. Consumers tend to trust reviews from other consumers who have already purchased and experienced the product, which ultimately makes them want to buy and try the product or service being offered. This shows that word-of-mouth (EWOM) information is considered more credible than promotions carried out by companies (Ngo et al, 2024).

EWOM also plays a role in shaping consumers' initial perceptions of a brand. Positive or negative impressions given by other consumers in social media comments or review columns will affect their brand image. Consumers who are impressed by positive reviews will have a positive brand image and higher trust in the product, and vice versa. This is in line with a study conducted by Erkan and Evans (2018) which identified four keys to effective EWOM, namely information quality, information readiness, information detail, and information relevance. These four dimensions can be used as a digital marketing strategy that emphasizes the importance of information by consumers in generating purchase intent. With , EWOM is not only a two-way communication tool but also social proof that can strengthen consumer confidence in making purchases.

## **3. The Influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Purchase Intention**

A thematic analysis of 20 articles shows that social media marketing (SMM) is one of the main factors influencing purchase intention. Most articles show the positive influence of social media marketing on purchase intention, either directly or indirectly. Social media marketing has been proven effective in increasing brand awareness, brand engagement, and long-term consumer-brand relationships through interactive content, promotions, and two-way communication between brands and audiences (Manzoor et al. 2020). SMM plays a role in determining marketing strategies to build consumer engagement with the brand, strengthen brand awareness, and increase trust in the brand, which will lead to consumer purchase intention (Nyagadza et al., 2022). In line with this, Kim & Ko (2012) divide the elements of social media marketing that can influence consumer purchase intention into:

- a. Interactivity is the extent to which brands and consumers interact with each other
- b. Entertainment is the appeal of entertaining social media content

- c. Trendiness is the ability to keep up with digital trends
- d. Customization is the personalization of messages to suit consumer needs
- e. EWOM is the ability of a platform to facilitate information exchange between users.

SMM on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has a stronger impact than traditional platforms due to the visual, fast-paced, and easy-to-understand nature of the content. Engaging and authentic SMM content will develop emotional evaluations that increase purchase interest. On the other hand, several studies also show that social media marketing is not only a promotional tool but also a tool for building long-term relationships between consumers and brands. It has an indirect influence on *purchase intention* through *brand image* and *brand trust* (Salhab et al., 2023 & Soleimani et al., 2023). This indicates that consumers are not only attracted by promotional content but also by the emotional value and credibility of the brand built through digital interactions. Therefore, the higher the trust and emotional connection with the brand, the greater the likelihood of consumers developing purchase intent.

#### **4. The Role of Brand Image in Purchase Intention Formation**

Thematic analysis shows that brand image emerges as an important mediator in the relationship between EWOM, SMM, and purchase intention. The study findings show that (1) a strong brand image will strengthen the effect of digital communication on purchase intention, (2) positive EWOM increases the perception of brand uniqueness and superiority, and (3) SMM encourages the formation of a more attractive brand image through the delivery of emotional value and visual aesthetics. Perceptions of a strong *brand image* can create positive impressions and increase the tendency to buy. In this case, brand image functions as a mental representation of the brand formed by consumers from their experiences, exposure, and digital information. When consumers have a positive image of a brand, they will be more likely to believe the messages conveyed in marketing and make the decision to purchase.

Research conducted by Evgeniy (2019) confirms that *brand image* can partially and significantly mediate the relationship between EWOM and *Purchase Intention*. This shows that positive reviews in comment sections or product reviews can improve consumer perceptions of brand excellence. Interactions that occur in comment sections and review columns that describe their experiences in using products or services can also increase trust in the brand and emotional connections between consumers, which ultimately lead to purchase intent.

In social media marketing, *brand image* has also been proven to mediate the relationship between SMM and *purchase intention*. This is demonstrated by research conducted by Salhab et al (2023), which shows that *brand image* has a positive and significant effect on *purchase intention* and can mediate the relationship between SMM and *purchase intention*. This indicates that social media that emphasizes interactivity and entertainment has a positive correlation with *purchase intention*. Social media functions as a channel that can gauge emotional engagement, which can effectively increase consumer purchase intention. This can occur when supported by a strong *brand image* foundation. Thus, *brand image*

can be viewed as a representation of brand value formed from experiences, digital communication, and social opinions that develop in the online space.

### **5. The Role of Brand Trust in Shaping Purchase Intention**

Thematic analysis of brand trust shows that brand trust can also be a mediating variable between EWOM and SMM with purchase intention. The results of the analysis show that brand trust is seen from its role in consumer confidence in the brand's ability to fulfill its promises, perceptions of quality consistency based on positive EWOM, and transparent and responsive digital interactions through SMM. Brand trust exists when consumers feel confident that the brand they choose has the right quality, receives positive reviews, and provides a consistent experience. Research conducted by Ezzat (2022) successfully proved the role of brand trust as a mediating variable that has a positive and significant effect on the relationship between EWOM and *purchase intention*. Positive EWOM can increase consumer trust in a brand. Consumers tend to trust comments from other consumers who have had real experiences more than photos or advertisements in promotions. The higher the level of consumer trust in a product, the higher the consumer's purchase intention for that product.

Soleimani's (2023) research on the role of *brand image* and *brand trust* in moderating the influence of SMM on purchase intention shows that there is a positive and significant influence of SMM on *purchase intention* through these mediating variables. Marketing strategies using social media have been proven to increase brand trust through interactive relationships between consumers. Real-time social media activities, such as product storytelling in live sessions, give an impression of openness that can increase perceptions of brand honesty and trust, making consumers feel that their needs and complaints are being addressed. Furthermore, brand trust can also connect consumers' emotional experiences and rational assessments, which increase purchase intention. Thus, consumers are not only attracted by digital trends but also because they believe that the brand is capable of delivering the value it claims to offer.

Brand trust serves to reduce risk perception, increase a sense of security, and provide confidence that a product or service will deliver the promised benefits. The existence of brand trust in consistent digital marketing communications can demonstrate an increase in purchase intention when accompanied by high trust in the brand. In addition, brand trust can also strengthen consumer emotions, resulting in consumer purchasing decisions based on confidence and psychological closeness to the brand.

### **6. Synthesis of Findings**

Based on the results of thematic analysis of 20 articles that have been reviewed, it can be concluded that purchase intention in the context of digital marketing is influenced by two main driving factors, namely: (1) Digital communication represented by EWOM and SMM, (2) Psychological brand constructs, namely brand image and brand trust. Thus, purchase intention in the digital era is not only a response to promotion but also the result of complex interactions between social information, brand perception, and consumer trust. Purchase intention is not only a marketing phenomenon but also a psychological phenomenon influenced by social dynamics, technology, and consumer digital

identity. These findings also confirm that purchase intention in the social media era must consider the following:

- a. The role of consumers as co-creators of information
- b. The power of authentic digital experiences
- c. The importance of content quality and brand transparency
- d. Differences in effects between platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and marketplaces
- e. The influence of cultural context and demographics

## **7. Analysis of Findings**

Although the results of several studies show that eWOM and SMM have the same influence on purchase intent, researchers found several things that need to be considered and studied further. First, most studies focus on the direct relationship between variables using a quantitative cross-sectional approach. This method cannot capture the dynamics of current digital consumer behavior, which is highly volatile and influenced by short-term trends. Second, brand image and brand trust variables are always considered important mediators. However, previous studies rarely look at how these two variables work together. Most studies discuss the functions of both, but brand image and brand trust can reinforce or influence purchasing decisions. The opportunity to build a more integrative theoretical model of the psychological mechanisms of purchase intention formation arises as a result of this gap.

Third, cultural factors and digital literacy levels appear to contribute to differences in results between countries. However, these elements have not been thoroughly discussed. For example, studies show that eWOM plays a stronger role in developing countries than in developed countries. This may be because consumers in developing countries rely heavily on other consumers' reviews to reduce risk when purchasing something. In addition, it is believed that social norms, beliefs in technology, and platform preferences influence the variability of findings; however, further research is needed.

Fourth, most studies have been conducted on popular platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and large marketplaces. However, each platform has unique characteristics that distinguish it, such as the fact that Instagram is an informational-transactional marketplace, and TikTok is impulsive-visual. It is difficult to determine which is most effective in influencing purchase intention because the current literature has not extensively compared the influence of eWOM and SMM across these platforms.

Finally, many studies have not examined how digital consumer behavior is increasingly influenced by new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), recommendation algorithms, and creator-based content economies. Thus, future research could benefit from a better technological understanding of purchase intention. Overall, this critical analysis shows that although the patterns of relationships between variables are fairly consistent, understanding purchase intention in the digital age still requires a broader, cross-contextual approach (.). It also needs to consider the dynamics of consumer behavior and the advancement of digital platforms.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on comprehensive understanding of purchase intention in the context of digital marketing show that *Electronic Word of Mouth* (EWOM) and *Social Media Marketing* (SMM) are the two most consistent communication factors influencing purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through *brand image* and *brand trust* as mediating variables. A review of 20 empirical articles from 2010 to 2025 shows that these two digital factors play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions, trust, and purchase intentions in the era of social media-based marketing. EWOM plays an important role as a credible source of information, while SMM contributes to building emotional connections and positive digital experiences. In addition, two psychological constructs, brand image and brand trust, serve as key links between digital communication and purchase intention. Brand image shapes how customers perceive brand value and identity, while brand trust increases customer confidence in brand credibility and reduces perceived purchase risk. The results show that purchase intention is the result of interactions between social, emotional, and cognitive components shaped by digital exposure.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on digital consumer behavior by establishing relationships between variables and showing how digital communication influences purchase intention through psychological brand mechanisms. Practically, these findings offer guidelines for businesses and marketers to create better digital marketing strategies, particularly by optimizing content quality, enhancing the credibility of consumer reviews, and consistently building brand image and trust across various social media platforms. Overall, this study confirms that in the context of contemporary digital marketing, consumer purchasing decisions are not only influenced by promotions and prices; digital social interactions also shape consumer trust and perceptions. Therefore, to strengthen brand position and drive sustainable purchase intent, it is important to invest more in managing brand image and brand trust.

Based on the findings of this SLR, the author recommends that future research expand the model by adding moderator variables such as social media platform type, content type, or consumer engagement level to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of EWOM and SMM influence on purchase intention. Future research is also advised to use a mixed-methods approach or longitudinal analysis to capture changes in dynamic digital consumer behavior. Practically speaking, businesses need to optimize content quality and consumer review credibility, improve the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies through interactive and relevant content, and consistently strengthen brand image and brand trust through transparent and responsive communication. In addition, the use of analytics technology and data-driven content personalization is also an important strategy for increasing trust and driving consumer purchase intent in a sustainable manner.

## FURTHER STUDY

Based on the results of thematic analysis, this study has limitations. The number of articles analyzed is still limited, and a cross-sectional research design was used for the most part, making it difficult to describe the dynamics of changes in digital consumer behavior. In addition, the available literature has not thoroughly discussed differences in cultural context, platform preferences, and industry characteristics. Considering these limitations, future research should use a longitudinal research design to study the differences between eWOM and SMM across social media platforms. Research should also investigate the role of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and recommendation algorithms in determining purchase intent. Cross-cultural research is essential to understand how social values and consumer characteristics influence the effectiveness of digital communication

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