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THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING: A STUDY OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA

SUMANPREET KAUR[1] and Dr. RAKESH KUMAR SHARMA[2]

[1]Research Scholar, School of Humanities & Social Sciences,
Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala.
Email: Punia.Sumanpreet28@gmail.com
[2]Associate Professor, School of Humanities & Social Sciences,
Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (Deemed University), Patiala.
Email: rakesh.kumar@thapar.edu

Abstract

Background: The existing studies in digital marketing have been conducted in the developed markets except a few which have been conducted in the emerging markets. Hence, the present study is an attempt to fill this research gap.

Purpose: Digital marketing is the avenue of electronic communication that is used to endorse goods and services in the marketplace. Nowadays companies are using digital marketing channels to publicize information about their brands and have a momentous impact on customers' preferences and purchase intentions. The main purpose of this paper is to scrutinize the impact of digital marketing channels and behavioral elements on purchase lead and product inclination.

Design/methodology/approach: A questionnaire-based survey was conducted in Punjab and Haryana to gauge consumers' responses to find out the impact of digital marketing channels and behavioral factors on purchase intentions and product preferences. Partial Least Square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is adapted to interpret the link between different indicators. Further, importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) has been employed to assess the significant and effective dimensions of digital marketing channels.

Findings: The results assert that digital marketing tools and psychological factors have a remarkable impact on consumer purchase intention and hence purchase decisions. IPMA concluded that the behavioral factor has the highest performance, and the usability of digital marketing channels has the lowest.

Conclusion: The obtained results conclude that purchase intentions and product preferences can be created and reinforced using digital marketing channels.

Contribution: Companies with online presence should beautify their digital marketing channels to improve sales. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers.

Originality: Most of the studies existing in this area have been conducted in the developed markets except a few which have been conducted in emerging markets. Hence, this present study is an attempt to fill this research gap.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Digital marketing channels, Product preferences, Purchase intentions, Structural equation modeling, Emerging markets.

JEL Classification: M30, M37, D90, D91.

1. INTRODUCTION

With time, modernistic trends of digital technologies have begun to encroach into traditional modes of doing business. If conventional businesses and organizations do not acknowledge the presence and impact of digital technology on commerce such organizations may cease to exist (Krbová& Pavelek, 2015). Digital marketing is often referred to as 'online marketing', 'internet marketing', or 'web marketing'. The term digital marketing has grown in popularity over time, particularly in certain countries. Digital marketing is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including

mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium. How digital marketing has developed since the 1990s and 2000s has changed the way brands and businesses utilize technology and digital marketing for their marketing (Sathya 2015). Digital marketing campaigns are becoming more prevalent as well as efficient, as digital platforms are increasingly incorporated into marketing plans and everyday life, and as people use digital devices instead of going to physical shops (Sathya 2015). Digital marketing is one of the most popular marketing approaches used by companies specifically through social media and email marketing which are highly effective in building customer engagement, an element that determines the prevalence of customers' purchase intention (Samsudeen M et al., 2020). Digital marketing is a platform where the consumer gets a wide variety of products not only within their geographical boundaries but from the entire world (Singla *et al*., 2020). According to international studies, consumers spend millions on online shopping due to the availability of modern applications and smartphones with lower costs, and most people spend many hours a day browsing various shopping services (Statista., 2019; Sweiss et al., 2021).Nowadays, companies are more inclined to increase their efficiency with focus on the purchase intentions of the customers to accept and use modern marketing means that encourage these companies to integrate and employ digital marketing strategies and focus on the usage of online platforms like social media (Ahmed & Zahid, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2021a; Lee et al., 2022a&b; Tariq et al., 2022a).

Digital marketing encloses all marketing resolutions that avails an electronic gadget or the internet. Business drags digital medium viz. - search engines, social media, email, and their websites to connect with customers. This can also be termed as ‘internet marketing’ or ‘web marketing. Digital marketing is explained using numerous digital tactics and mediums to connect with customers where they spend plenty of their time: online from website to business's online branding assets - digital advertising, mail marketing, online brochures, and beyond there is a spectrum of tactics falling under the umbrella of "digital marketing. “The table below depicts the digital marketing channels by Stokes (2011).

Table 1: Digital Marketing Channels

Digital Marketing Channels	Definition
Email marketing	Digital Marketing delivers messages to an audience through electronic mail.
Online Advertising	Advertisements that are displayed on the internet
Affiliate Marketing	An online affiliate markets products of an organization and gets rewarded for referrals
Search Engine Marketing	Marketing that is related to searches on the internet
Pay Per Click Advertising	An online advertising system whereby the advertiser pays for clicks on their advert
Social Media Marketing	The creation, publication, and sharing of content by individuals such as blogs, images, and videos on the internet.

(Stokes,2011)

Specifically, we address the following research questions:

RQ1. How do behavioral factors affect purchase intention?

RQ2. How does the usability of digital marketing channels affect purchase intention?

RQ3. How does product preference influence purchase intention?

*RQ4***.** How does searching and evaluating options influence purchase intentions?

The structure of this paper is as follows:

We discuss the concept of digital marketing followed by a related literature review. We propose a research model based on the literature. Next, we discuss our methodology and present the results of structural equation modeling (SEM). Finally, we discuss the implications, limitations and future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper presents a literature review of the impact of digital marketing channels and behavioral factors on purchase intention and product preference. Then we present the research model, the measurement scales, and the description of the sample and procedure used.

Businesses are more reliant on digital marketing in this digitalization era to connect to their audience. Social media platforms are emerging as an influential tool of marketing for businesses. Smith and Zook (2019), explained that brand perception and purchase intention are largely impacted by social media marketing. Content that is engaging, collaboration with influencers, and user-generated content on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram etc. ought to influence the choices of the consumer.

On the other hand, Email marketing is still a resourceful channel for businesses. Personalized Emails play a vital role in influencing purchase intention (Gupta and Shukla, 2019), which in turn results in customer engagement and increases conversion rates as well. The same is the case with search engine optimization.

Consumers generally give preference and show trust in the products/brands that appear on the top of search engine results (Lee and Kim, 2020). Also, the online presence of a brand and more visibility on search engines is pivotal in influencing purchase intentions.

2.1. Impact of Digital Marketing on Product Preferences

Digital marketing channels have shown quite a good importance in consumer product preferences. Through various digital media platforms such as websites, email, social media, and mobile applications, marketers can directly engage with consumers and influence their buying decisions (Ajina, 2019).

These channels allow for personalized and interactive content, which creates unique and positive experiences for customers. By utilizing digital marketing channels, companies can effectively communicate with their target audience, providing them with information, opinions, and attitudes about a product or brand. This ultimately leads to increased brand awareness, access to information, and favorable attitudes towards a product, all of which contribute to shaping consumer preferences.

The use of digital marketing channels also impacts the customer journey and purchase process. By providing easy access to information and opportunities for online reviews, digital marketing channels influence purchasing behavior. Additionally, digital marketing allows for post-purchase communication and evaluation, which further influences product preferences. Furthermore, digital marketing strategies and tactics have been shown to enhance cost-effectiveness for businesses.

These channels provide a more cost-effective approach compared to traditional offline marketing methods such as newspapers, billboards, and radio. This online marketing system allows businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to reach their sales and audience targets appropriately, effectively, and efficiently (Gensler et al., 2012).

The growth of digital platforms like Zomato and Swiggy has provided customers with a practical way to get information about restaurants, menus and user reviews. The restaurant business has undergone a substantial revolution (Inthong et. al., 2022).

Customer reviews have grown in importance as a deciding factor for customers selecting a product/restaurant in this digital age (Lee et.al.,2021; Silayoi et al.,2004).

Online reviews are becoming more widely used and significant as an impartial source of product information. With feedback and online reviews, the Internet has enabled today's customers into active and knowledgeable consumers who can share their experience related to a particular good or service with countless customers worldwide (Kozinets, 1999; Andzuliset al., 2012) then it comes right down to reviews, customers are more attentive to them since they want to learn about experiences from individuals like them and accordingly, they build their preferences for the product.

H1**:** *Digital marketing has a significant effect on product preference.*

2.2. Behavioral Factors Contributing to Purchase Intentions:

Several factors and characteristics influence the individual in the decision-making process, including less-purchasing behavior, shopping habits, culture, sub-culture, social class, peer groups, family, personality, psychological factors, etc. Also, influenced by cultural trends as well as the societal environment. By recognizing and understanding the factors that influence their customers, brands have the chance to develop a plan, a marketing message, and advertising campaigns more efficiently and in line with the needs and ways of thinking of their target consumers

Consumer buying behavior is the physical, mental, and emotional activities that consumers are engaged in when selecting, buying and using products or services to get satisfied in terms of their needs and desires. It is the summation of their attitudes, preferences and decisions towards purchasing any product or service (Sethna and Blythe, 2016). The majority of the consumers believed that while buying a product, a product choice is determined by the product packaging (Lifu,2012).

He found that consumers believe that good and attractive packaging represents quality products and illiterate consumers buy products by judging the package and purchase a product on mere packaging which adds value and appeals to the consumers at the very first sight. Consumers are influenced by social status, lifestyle, personality, attitudes, demographics, and culture and this ultimately influences their purchase decision towards products and services (Babin et. al.,2012).

The impact of digital marketing channels on consumer purchase intentions is significant due to the various behavioral factors that contribute to purchase intentions. These factors include the influence of social media and digital platforms, the effectiveness of targeted messaging and personalized content, the role of user-generated content and social proof, and the overall ease and convenience provided by digital channels (Lin, 2008).

Overall, the impact of digital marketing channels and behavioral factors on purchase intentions is undeniable. Consumers are increasingly exposed to and influenced by digital marketing channels in their purchase decisions. The use of digital marketing channels and behavioral factors have a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions (Powers et al., 2012).

H2**:** *Behavioral factors influence purchase intentions.*

2.3. Usability Digital Marketing Channels affect Purchase Intentions using product preference as a mediator.

Consumers are increasingly relying on digital channels for product research, comparison, and evaluation. These channels allow companies to effectively target and personalize their marketing efforts, influencing consumer attitudes and ultimately driving purchase intentions. The impact of digital marketing channels on purchase intentions is significant, as these channels provide valuable information, social proof, and personalized messaging that can influence consumer decisions.

The use of digital marketing channels has a direct influence on consumer purchase intentions. Digital marketing channels provide opportunities for companies to engage with consumers, create awareness about their products or services, and shape consumer attitudes and perceptions (Ajina, 2019). This ultimately influences their decision-making process and increases the likelihood of purchase. The influence of digital marketing channels on consumer purchase intentions cannot be underestimated. Digital marketing channels play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase intentions.

They provide a platform for companies to showcase their products, engage with consumers, and build brand loyalty. Modern marketing strategies are making digital marketing an integral part. To reach the target audience, companies are increasingly using digital channels such as websites, mobile apps, social media platforms, search engine marketing, and email marketing (Ajina, 2019). These digital channels allow companies to communicate and engage with consumers in a more personalized and interactive manner. By leveraging digital marketing channels, companies can effectively increase brand awareness, provide access to information about their products or services, shape consumer opinions and attitudes, influence purchasing behavior, facilitate post-purchase communication, and evaluate various aspects of consumer behavior (Akbar et al., 2020). The utilization of digital marketing channels has a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions. The digital environment has reshaped the way consumers make purchasing decisions. Consumers now have access to a wealth of information and options at their fingertips, allowing them to compare products, read reviews, and make informed decisions. The rise of social media platforms has transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchase decisions. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have become powerful marketing tools that enable companies to reach a wider audience and build brand awareness through engaging content and targeted advertising (Prihatna & Hereyah, 2021).

The paradigm of digital marketing has resulted in crucial changes in the worldwide markets and increased the prevalence of customer's purchase intentions and this resulted in several implementations of advanced business technologies that have been created in response to the business changes (Poyurak& Softic, 2019; Khasawneh et al., 2021a&b). Digital marketing is supposed to be one of the most modern marketing methods widely used for customer communication and product/service promotion with no limitation on place, time, and cost (Monfared et al., 2021). Wibisurya (2018) showed that digital marketing had a positive significant effect on purchase intention, with the main effect on the attractive content and customization for the customers. Similarly (Poyurak and Softic,2019) have also confirmed this result with a positive effect of digital marketing on purchase intention by exchanging ideas and opinions with numerous customers.

H3. *Digital marketing channels have a positive impact on purchase intentions.*

2.4. Impact of searching and evaluating options on purchase intentions

Customers cannot touch or feel the product online unlike offline purchases so entirely depend on consumer reviews (Schneider and Zielke, 2020). According to a Google study conducted by Morrison (2015) based on 57 million online customer reviews, indicated that these reviews influenced consumers' purchase choices. Online customer reviews help consumers identify information about a product that is the best option according to their needs (Schneider and Zielke, 2020).

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) which is defined as the online form of word of mouth has been created because of the advancement of technology (Delafrooz, Rahmati, & Abdi, 2019; Chu & Sung, 2015). eWOM facilitates consumers to share their personal opinions with the public through social networks. Consumers will analyze consumers' comments before buying because they want to get information on whether the products will be as good as described or not (Dhahak& Huseynov, 2020; Khwaja, Mahmood, & Zaman, 2020; Sa'ait, Kanyan, & Nazrin, 2016; Almana& Mirza, 2013). Online consumer reviews allow consumers to demonstrate their opinions regarding a product or service and help consumers to make analyzed decisions while purchasing (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, Dwivedi, 2020; Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012).

70 percent of customers refer to online reviews before finalizing their purchase decisions, and 63 percent of customers are more likely to buy the product if it has higher product ratings and positive reviews (Rauschnabel et al., 2019). Young shoppers are the predominant group who prefer to buy online (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016). online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions only when consumers' reliance on online reviews is considerably high while they make purchase decisions (Zhu & Zhang, 2010) Online reviews support consumers in getting product-related information, hence increasing their confidence in online purchasing (Changchit et al., 2022).

Personal opinions and experiences for products and services in the form of online reviews have become one of the most exquisite sources of information helping users while making purchasing decisions (Chua & Banerjee, 2015; Dellarocas, 2003; Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2003; Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Floh et al. (2013) found online review texts more impactful compared to aggregated ratings. Online review platforms, video-sharing platforms and personal blogs with reviews in various formats with emphasis on specific features of the review tool show the importance of platform credibility and usability on consumer trust and reliability in reviews as input in the decision-making process (Efthymios Constantinides, 2016).

According to a study conducted by Ahamed Mahdi(2023), positive reviews, ratings, picture reviews and cumulative reviews influence consumer purchase behavior. Guo et al. (2020) found positive online customer reviews lead to higher possibilities than unpleasant ones. The impact of online review variance of new products on consumer purchase intentions depicted that product newness and review variance influence the consumers' adoption intentions (Wu et al., 2021).

Malkar Vinod Ramchandra (2017) conducted a study to understand the effect of customer reviews and star ratings on the purchase decision of the product as well as the value of consumer feedback from buyers' and sellers' points of view who stated that product reviews can be of great help to customers as it offers information of product use, efficiency, durability, prices etc.

H4. *Searching and Evaluating options impact consumer decision-making significantly.*

Based on the literature review, a research model is proposed to compare the relationships. Figure-1:

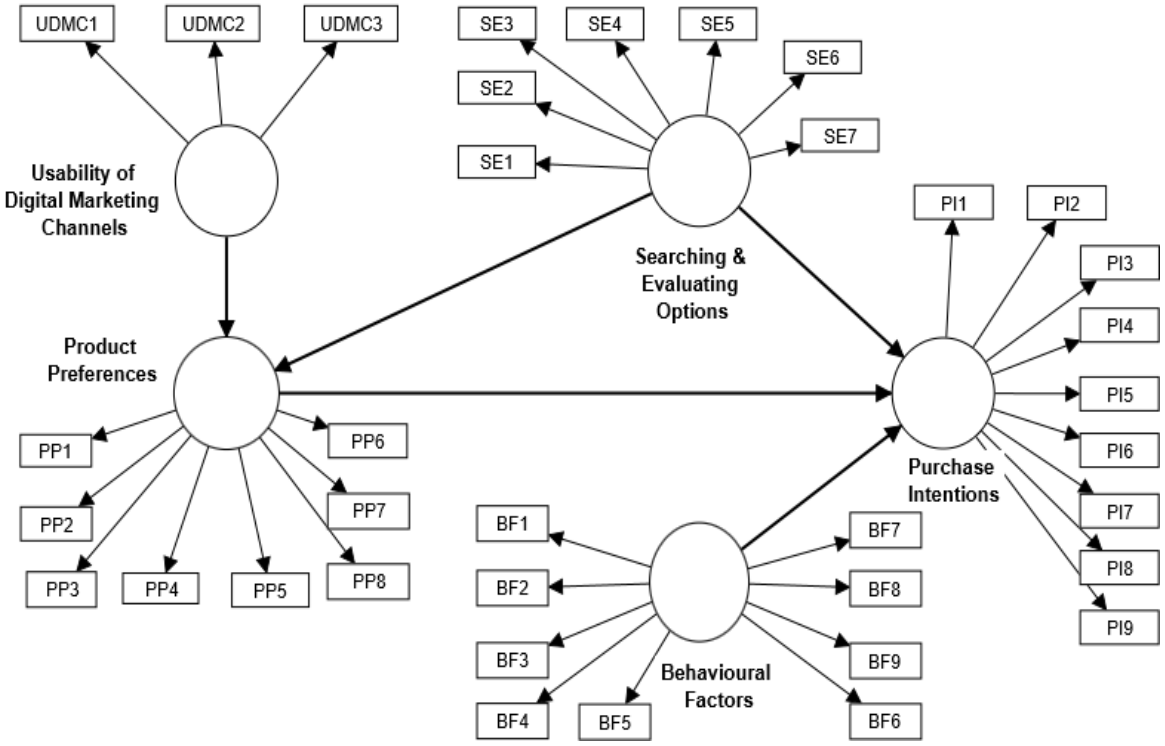

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

This empirical study used an adapted questionnaire survey to collect data. Therefore, the current study used quantitative and co-relational in nature to achieve objectives. In addition, data was collected by using a questionnaire technique.

3.1. Questionnaire development

The present study used existing scales. A brief introduction is provided at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure clarity. The data is collected using a survey method. The selection of a quantitative approach to conducting this research is considered appropriate to involve as many participants as possible and obtain a larger number of responses. For this study, the data is collected using a structured questionnaire. Additionally, a quantitative survey methodology is the researchers' best choice when the targeted population comprises a larger number of individuals. (McDaniel and Gates,1998) illustrated that the quantitative survey enables researchers to conduct statistical analysis and generalize the results in each context. To minimize the response bias and sampling error, the respondents are briefed about the purpose of the study and assured that their answers will be kept confidential. In this study, a convenience sampling technique is used. The questionnaire is divided into two different sections. In section A, demographic information of respondents is gathered. In section B, the respondents are asked to indicate their frequency of accessing the Internet to search for products, information, and prices. They are asked to mark their answer among daily, weekly, and monthly options available in the questionnaire. Also, they marked their preference on a 5-point Likert Scale to buy products online using digital marketing channels.

3.2. Data Analysis

The SEM approach has been widely utilized by researchers for data analysis. The use of variance-based PLS-SEM was appropriate as the sample size for this study was large (Javed and Khan,2020; Talwar et al.2021a, b). Moreover, PLS-SEM can easily handle data even when it does not meet the assumption of normality (Javed and Khan,2020). The data was analyzed in three steps, first, a preliminary analysis was done to check for common method bias. Second, the PLS-SEM measurement model was assessed to check the consistency and validity of the variables. Further, the PLS-SEM structural model was assessed to test the hypotheses and determine the relationships between the constructs.

3.3. Population and Sampling

The present study used 273 samples and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the help of Smart PLS software. The results of the data analysis showed that digital marketing, customer engagement, and product preferences can predict purchase intentions. According to (Saunders et al.,2016), the population is the complete set of cases from which a sample is acquired. The target population for this study is from Punjab and Haryana. The targeted respondents will have certain characteristics because the probability of random sampling will be utilized during data collection. These features will comprise respondents of age 18 and above who have access to and knowledge of digital marketing. There are two types of sampling techniques, probability, and non-probability. Probability sampling contains numerous methods for the random selection of the respondents from the entire population. Due to the researcher's access to the whole population, the possibility of choosing each of the populations is known (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). To achieve the objectives of the study, respondents are selected using the convenience random sampling method, the justification for using this type of sampling is to allow the researcher to choose and focus on certain characteristics of the population interesting and will enable him/her to answer research questions. The sample size for this study is 273 and the sample population is Punjab and Haryana. The data is collected using online and offline methods of data collection.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

GENDER	MALE	158
	FEMALE	115
AGE	18-25	115
	25-35	118
	Above 35	40
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	148
	SINGLE	125
EDUCATIONAL STATUS	MATRICULTE OR INTERMEDIATE	29
	GRADUATE	133
	POSTGRADUATE AND ABOVE	111
OCCUPATION	BUSINESS	49
	SALARIED	128
	OTHERS	96
ANNUAL INCOME (IN RS.)	BELOW 3,00,000	60
	3,00,000 – 5,00,000	173
	ABOVE 5,00,000	40

Source: Authors' Calculation by PLS-SEM

4.1. Measurement model assessment

The evaluations of the measurement model confirm the reliability and validity of the model (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The results demonstrate the validity of the indicators, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the respective constructs. The reliability of the indicators was assessed with the outer loading values, and it has been confirmed that the minimum loading is 0.708, as per the guidelines of (Hair et al.,2019). Table 3 shows the values of Cronbach's alpha (α) and values of composite reliability (CR). Both the values fall within the acceptable limit of 0.70-0.95. The values of CR and rho A values are above the threshold of 0.70. The convergent validity of the model has been confirmed by assessing the value of average variance extracted (AVE) and results of AVE are greater than 0.50, as described in Table 3. Thus, the whole measurement of the whole model has been evaluated. These results confirm the validity and reliability as consistent with the previous research (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 2: Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Sr. no	Construct	Indicators	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance Extracted
1	**Behavioral Factors**	BF1	0.751	0.915	0.916	0.930	0.595
		BF2	0.754				
		BF3	0.808				
		BF4	0.804				
		BF5	0.760				
		BF6	0.773				
		BF7	0.770				
		BF8	0.778				
		BF9	0.741				
2	**Product Preferences**	PP1	0.727	0.919	0.924	0.934	0.641
		PP2	0.815				
		PP3	0.803				
		PP4	0.869				
		PP5	0.856				
		PP6	0.818				
		PP7	0.717				
		PP8	0.788				
3	**Purchase Intentions**	PI1	0.767	0.947	0.948	0.955	0.704
		PI2	0.848				
		PI3	0.854				
		PI4	0.850				
		PI5	0.791				
		PI6	0.878				
		PI7	0.851				
		PI8	0.856				
		PI9	0.851				
4	**Searching & Evaluating Options**	SE1	0.765	0.889	0.896	0.913	0.599
		SE2	0.808				
		SE3	0.765				
		SE4	0.726				
		SE5	0.769				
		SE6	0.786				
		SE7	0.796				
5	**Usability of Digital Marketing Channels**	UDMC1	0.784	0.818	0.819	0.893	0.736
		UDMC2	0.894				
		UDMC3	0.891				

Source: Authors' Calculation by PLS-SEM

The discriminant validity of the model has been evaluated by using Heterotrait- Monotrait (HTMT) approach (Henseler et al., 2015). As per the analysis, the HTMT values of all the constructs are below the threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 2023) (Table 4). The output of this analysis has shown that the discriminant validity has been established.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Constructs	Behavioral Factors	Product Preferences	Purchase Intentions	Searching & Evaluating Options
Product _Preferences	0.372			
Purchase Intentions	0.636	0.466		
Searching & Evaluating _Options	0.670	0.525	0.746	
Usability of Digital Marketing Channels	0.422	0.833	0.391	0.514

Source: Authors' Calculations

4.2. Structural Model Assessment

The evaluation of structural path assessment has been evaluated with the recommendations of Hair et al., (2019, 2022). Firstly, the coefficient of determination (R2) for the endogenous construct has been assessed (Hair et al., 2017). The value of R2 of product preferences and purchase intentions have been evaluated to be 0.558 and 0.544 respectively.

It can be interpreted that 55.8% of the variance in product preferences is determined by independent constructs Usability of digital marketing channels and searching &and evaluating options, and 54.4% of variance in purchase intentions by searching and evaluating options, product preferences, and behavioral factors.

The variance inflation factor (VAF) values have been found within the acceptable threshold of 3.33 (Hair et al., 2019) (Table 5 and Figure 2), indicating the absence of multi-collinearity issues. Thus, it has been implied that the absence of multi-collinearity issues confirmed the validity and correctness of the study.

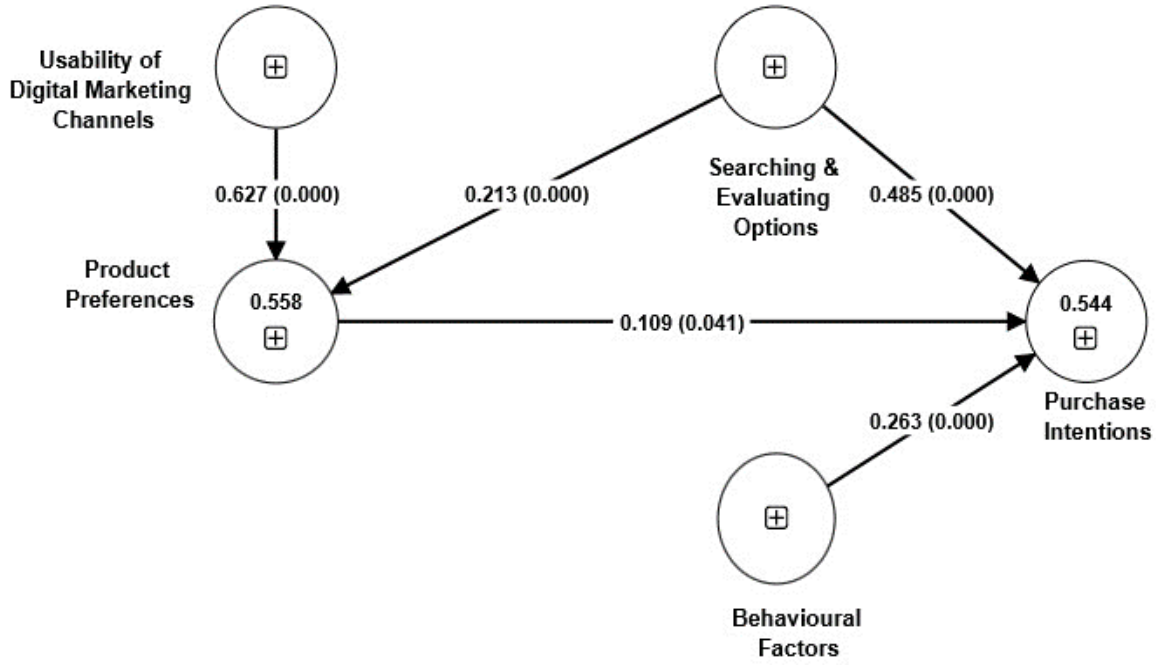

Figure 2: Structural Path Assessment

Table 4: Results of Path Assessment

Hypotheses	Predictor variable	Structural Path Relationship	Beta Values	Confidence Intervals (CI)	VIF	f^2	Significance
H1	BF	BF→ PI	0.263	[0.145; 0.393]	1.595	0.095	Yes
H2	PP	PP→ PI	0.109	[0.004; 0.214]	1.330	0.020	Yes
H3	SE	SE→ PI	0.213	[0.125; 0.308]	1.251	0.082	Yes
H4	SE	SE→ PP	0.485	[0.352; 0.601]	1.850	0.278	Yes
H5	UDMC	UDMC→ PP	0.627	[0.536; 0.707]	1.251	0.712	Yes

Note (s): BF = Behavioural Factors, PP= Product Preferences, SE= Searching & Evaluating Options, PI= Purchase Intentions, UDMC= Usability of Digital Marketing Channels

Source: Authors' Calculation by PLS-SEM

For the testing of the hypotheses, bootstrapping method with 273 cases and 10,000 subsamples (Hair et al., 2022). The outcomes of the structural model assessment are shown in Table 6. The Behavioral factors positively influence purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.263$, $\rho = 0.000$), and support the H1. H2 has been supported as the product preferences positively influence the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.109$, $\rho = 0.041$). Searching and evaluating options significantly influence the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.213$, $\rho = 0.000$), thus supporting H3. H4 has been supported with the positive impact of searching and evaluating options on product preferences. The usability of digital marketing channels has a significant influence on product preferences, supporting H5.

The value of standardized mean square residual (SRMR) has been used to determine the goodness of fit index to evaluate the model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The SRMR value of the estimated model has been reported to be 0.065, less than 0.08 (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, the evaluations validate the model's good fit (Henseler et al., 2012).

Table 5: Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
BF -> P1	0.263	0.268	0.063	4.152	**0.000**
PP -> P1	0.109	0.109	0.053	2.039	**0.041**
SE -> P1	0.485	0.483	0.064	7.604	**0.000**
SE -> PP	0.213	0.216	0.046	4.615	**0.000**
UDMC -> PP	0.627	0.626	0.043	14.624	**0.000**
				R Square	
PI				0.544	
PP				0.558	

Source: Authors' Calculation by PLS-SEM

4.3. Assessment of the Prediction Relevance (Q2 predict)

The out-sample prediction relevance of the model has been assessed by applying the PLS prediction approach. The authors have used this PLS prediction technique to assess the prediction relevance of target construct purchase intentions (Shmueli et al., 2019; Danks and Ray, 2018). As per the analysis, Table 7 shows the out-sample predictive relevance of purchase intentions as all the values of Q2 are greater than zero indicating the presence of predictive relevance.

Furthermore, the values of PLS-RMSE have been compared with the LM-RMSE values, the results indicating that the model has the highest predictive relevance (Table 8).

Table 6: Results of PLS Prediction

Construct	Indicators	Q^2 predict	PLS		LM		PLS-LM RMSE	Predictive Relevance
			RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE		
Purchase Intentions	PI1	0.438	0.829	0.634	0.891	0.649	-0.062	Highest Predictive Relevance
	PI2	0.393	0.881	0.684	0.908	0.687	-0.027	
	PI3	0.357	0.869	0.675	0.920	0.703	-0.051	
	PI4	0.427	0.788	0.638	0.821	0.646	-0.033	
	PI5	0.255	0.861	0.686	0.879	0.674	-0.018	
	PI6	0.343	0.888	0.695	0.923	0.695	-0.035	
	PI7	0.336	0.877	0.699	0.903	0.695	-0.026	
	PI8	0.323	0.920	0.723	0.973	0.749	-0.053	
	PI9	0.353	0.875	0.678	0.926	0.698	-0.051	

Source: Authors' own calculations
Note: PLS- Partial least square; RMSE- Root mean square error; MAE- Mean Absolute Error; LM- Linear Model

Source: Authors' Calculation by PLS-SEM

4.4 Importance performance map analysis (IPMA)

To evaluate the comprehensive understanding of the constructs, a priority map analysis, known as importance-performance map analysis (IPMA), has been deployed at the construct level (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). This approach assesses the importance (total effects) of the constructs namely product preferences, searching and evaluating options, usability of digital marketing channels, and behavioral factors. This method also measures the performance of the respective constructs which contribute to the dependent construct of purchase intentions (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). As the results of IPMA show the construct of search and evaluating options has the largest effect (0.508) followed by behavioral factors (0.263) Figure 3 Table 8. If the performance of behavioral factors changes by one unit from 58.637 to 58.638, then the performance of purchase intentions will be enhanced from 59.127 to 59.390. Similarly, one unit of change in the performance of product preferences from 51.480 to 51.481 will increase the performance of purchase intentions from 59.127 to 59.236. The effect size of usability of digital marketing capabilities is of least value (0.068). The IPMA analysis also shows that the construct of behavioral factor has the highest performance (58.637) and the usability of digital marketing channels has the lowest (44.935).

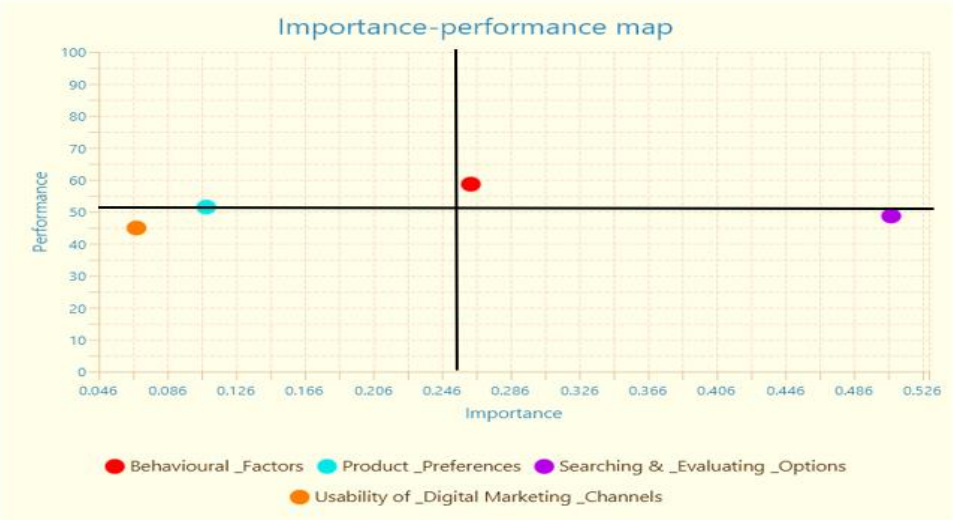

Figure 3: IPMA analysis matrix

Table: 7 IPMA Results

Constructs	Importance	Performance
Behavioral Factors	0.263	58.637
Product Preferences	0.109	51.480
Searching & Evaluating Options	0.508	48.694
Usability of Digital Marketing Channels	0.068	44.935
Average	*0.237*	*50.936*

Source: Authors' own calculations

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the findings gained by the analysis, it is found that there is a positive significant impact of the digital marketing channels on Product preferences and purchase intention. The results of the regression coefficients also revealed a significant level of less than 0.05. Also, the research results on the moderating effect of product preference on the relationship between the usability of digital marketing channels and purchase intention showed a positive significant moderating effect of this over the respective relationship. Also, the out-sample predictive relevance of purchase intentions as all the values of Q2 are greater than zero indicating the presence of highest predictive relevance. The consumers confirmed that digital marketing provides a wide range of products and offers the required information about these products which makes the shopping process easier and more interesting. They also agreed that digital marketing provided opinions exchanging and discussion of the negative or positive traits of a product which also enabled the consumers to form a clear picture of a particular product before making a purchase. These results are also consistent with some studies e.g. (Erlangga, 2021) that demonstrated that media marketing had a significant impact on the purchase decisions of the consumers. However, the previous studies also suggested involving new critical factor that might influence the purchase decisions and intentions of the customers with more emphasis on emerging situations e.g COVID-19 which also encourages online shopping and limit the chances of traditional marketing behaviors and practices due to the pandemic spreads that also limit the direct and personal interactions to curb this health threat.

In Punjab and Haryana, the mix of marketing elements in place and the information provided about this key element which includes the supplies and equipment correspond with the emerging crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic that helps in generating the customer's intention to go through the digital marketing tools in the future. Due to the major goal of contemporary businesses being associated with retention and attracting new customers, it has become more difficult because of this new condition worldwide. The digital marketing channels provide customers with a wide range of alternatives which enables them to make the right The developed marketing aspects have enabled to creation of a direct positive association between digital marketing methods and purchase intention. It has become important for marketers to pay more attention and invest more in the current technological infrastructure to enhance the quality of products/services when maintaining product preferences and distinctiveness to ensure long-term customer relationships. The literature and empirical works have revealed that digital marketing is a key factor and significantly affects the purchase intention of customers with some support from relevant previous study results. In the current research, the digital marketing dimensions (social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth) have a significant and positive effect on purchase intention. Therefore, this concept has taken its importance because advanced technological devices have become part of customers' lives like computers, smartphones, and tablets. The study offers some practical implications to increase

the levels of purchase intention, the study suggested that the store management should incorporate advanced forms of positive brand value to enhance brand awareness through digital marketing approaches e.g., social-media platforms.

According to the findings of this research, moderating the role of brand equity would improve the need to integrate more updated marketing means with more focus on the prevailing purchasing behaviors to effectively respond to the critical changes in this field. Moreover, marketing managers are invited to strive to work with the most influential digital marketing tools such as social media and the great benefits and influence that could gain from this implementation. This should be accompanied by sufficient marketing plans to achieve greater brand equity for profitable purchase decisions of consumers. The research contributes to the theory by establishing a relationship between digital marketing dimensions (social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth) and purchase intention with a moderated role of brand equity has not been examined in a developing context like Punjab and Haryana. Practically, the research results provide meaningful insights and useful understanding for digital marketers regarding the brand value that would act as an attraction for new potential customers. Generally, the study concluded that customers favor easy and advanced marketing methods with various aspects of this process for good marketing performance. Finally, graphics with light or natural background colors are preferred to darker ones. This research has some limitations.

First, it used the quantitative research approach through survey questionnaires to conduct an online research instrument to reflect the internet population's views, so offline customers are not considered in this study. Second, because of resource constraints, the sample size representing the current study population is limited to only 273 participants which may limit the generalization chance. Third, the findings are limited only to the Punjab and Haryana contexts that were addressed in this research, hence can't be generalized to other contexts. Future research directions and avenues include investigating the impact of social media sources on purchase decisions over other different industries and contexts with different sample and cultural perspectives for deeper understanding and exploration of critical phenomena linked to customers' expectations and perceptions of marketing preferences.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has certain limitations. First, because of resource constraints, the sample size representing the current study population is limited to only 273 participants which may limit the generalization chance. Second, the findings are limited to only Punjab and Haryana, hence cannot be generalized to other contexts. Future research directions and avenues include investigating the impact of digital marketing channels and behavioral factors on purchase intentions and product preferences over other different contexts with different sample sizes and cultural perspectives for a deeper understanding and exploration of critical phenomena linked to customers' expectations and perceptions of marketing preferences.

Competing interests:

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Author contributions:

All authors contributed to the conception, conceptualization, and creation of the methodology of the study and the data analysis reported in this article. All authors have read and agreed to publish a version of the manuscript.

Ethical Consideration:

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects. This study used two corrective procedures as bias control approaches and for ethical consideration. Firstly, it is ensured that the language of the questions in the questionnaire is simple and precise to avoid ambiguous concepts for respondents. Secondly, the confidentiality of respondents is also ensured.

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On request, the corresponding authors will provide all secondary data that is used to draw the study's conclusions.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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