
The Impact of Digital Marketing Channels on Consumer Buying Decision

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Abstract – Recent reports show how Malaysians are increasingly turning to digital channels for purchasing and making decisions. However, some issues that arise in different digital marketing channels, including email marketing, search engine marketing, and social media marketing, can lead to negative consequences such as email overload, misinterpretation of search results, and the spread of false or offensive content. The study aimed to examine the impact of email marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), and social media marketing on consumer buying decisions. The study used a quantitative method, with 384 respondents from the region Johor, Malaysia, surveyed using convenience sampling. The results of the study indicated that email marketing has a negative relationship with consumer buying decisions, whereas search engine marketing and social media marketing have a positive relationship with consumer buying decisions. Therefore, the study recommends that marketers focus on digital marketing channels such as search engines and social media marketing to improve their marketing efficiency since they have a more significant impact on consumer buying decisions compared to email marketing.

Keywords - Email marketing, Social media marketing, Search engine marketing, Consumer buying decision

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1. Introduction

The growing importance of digital marketing resources in Malaysia has been revealed by recent data and research. According to the Statista report (2021), Malaysia had spent \$566 million on digital advertising by 2021, representing an annual growth rate of 12.2%. Furthermore, this spending is expected to continue to grow annually by 8.2% through 2025, reaching \$1 billion. These figures show a significant increase in digital advertising spend and highlight the increasing adoption of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in reaching target audiences emphasizing the growing trend. The results of a survey conducted by PwC Malaysia in 2019 also showed that Malaysians prefer to buy consumer goods such as clothes and cosmetics online (60%) than durable goods such as electronics and home appliances (44%). Thus, these changes in consumer behavior are well with the target market. It emphasizes the importance of using digital marketing strategies to engage and attract attention. Furthermore, the same survey found that 37% of Malaysian respondents are influenced by social media and 43% prefer to research online before buying, highlighting the impact of social media and online research on consumers emphasize purchasing decision. This shows that companies must use digital marketing platforms to deliver pertinent and educational material that can impact consumers' decision-making. Additionally, the iPrice Group (2020) analysis on increasing online buying during the pandemic highlights the significance of digital marketing for meeting and exceeding consumer needs. Consumers regularly look for sales and discounts while

purchasing online, which emphasizes the importance of price tactics in digital marketing initiatives.

Overall, these facts show how Malaysians are increasingly turning to digital channels for purchasing and making decisions. Effective digital marketing tactics that give online customers ease, control, and pertinent information are needed for businesses to respond to these changes. Businesses may increase the market and, interact with their target market, and affect their buying choices by utilizing digital marketing platforms. Therefore, companies need to ensure their digital marketing strategies cater to the preferences and behaviors of Malaysian customers to remain competitive in the market. According to recent studies, email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing are among the most effective types of digital marketing (David et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2022; Natasha et al., 2021). Many studies highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of different digital marketing channels, including email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing (e.g Omar & Atteya, 2020; Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018; Sigar et al., 2021; Ramesh & Vidhya, 2019).

Customers can benefit from email marketing channels by receiving pertinent and customized product information (Li & Kannan, 2014), establishing trust (Qalati et al., 2021), communicating the value proposition of goods or services and highlighting their advantages and convenience (Muttaqin et al., 2022), and utilizing permission-based marketing, which enables companies to reach a larger audience and close deals with little upfront investment (Harum et al., 2021). To maximize the efficiency of email marketing in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions, however, issues including information overload, perceived risk, customer engagement, and determining the ideal email frequency need to be addressed (Zhang et al., 2017; Qalati et al., 2021). For example, email overload or email fatigue is a critical issue in email marketing that can affect customer purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2017). Customers tend to view only the first few pages of email. As more and more companies use email marketing to promote their products and services, customers can become overwhelmed with the number of promotional emails they receive, leading to a decline in engagement and response rates. Nelson (2017) stated that 74% of consumers are overwhelmed by email overload which directly negatively affects customers' perceived value, trust, and attitude toward the brand, ultimately leading to a decrease in purchase intention.

In addition, customers often use popular search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo, and DuckDuckGo to search for products or services. Among these, Google is the most widely used search engine globally, holding a significant market share (Rovira et al., 2019). Search engine marketing provides customers with easy access to information on a given topic, but there are concerns about the accuracy and relevance of the search results. Search relevance is a key measurement of the usefulness of search engines, and the shift of search relevance among search engines can easily change a search company's market cap by tens of billions of dollars (Xu et al., 2009). In fact, search engine optimization is a major pillar of digital marketing, and onsite optimization techniques are used by e-shops to improve their ranking in search engine results (Makrydakis & Skopeteas, 2022). Additionally, users of web search engines are primarily focused on obtaining relevant information pertaining to their query. However, search engines that fail to satisfy users' information needs may find their market share to be negatively affected (Hu et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to ensure that their search engine marketing strategies prioritize search results' relevance to improving customer buying decisions.

Besides, social media marketing is a strategy that involves using social media platforms to promote products or services, engage with customers, and build brand awareness (Moslehpour et al., 2020). There are several popular platforms that businesses commonly use for marketing purposes such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter and Youtube which play a crucial role in assisting customers with their purchasing decision-making process. For instance, Utari et al. (2023) discovered that Instagram's influence and effective use positively increase consumer buying interest, highlighting the significance of Instagram as a marketing approach. Another study by Meliawati et al. (2023) examined TikTok and found that social media marketing affects purchase intention in a favorable way. This study emphasizes the importance of social media platforms in influencing customer purchasing choices. However, there are problems with social media marketing and how it affects customer choices. For instance, decision paralysis or uncertainty may result from information overload and difficulties navigating through extensive content on social media sites (Haudi et al., 2022). Consumer decisions may be influenced by the reliability and validity of information published on social media, particularly with influencer marketing and sponsored content (Busalim et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated that false or offensive posts on social media can negatively impact consumer buying decisions (Huang, 2016). Negative social media posts, customer reviews, and articles can harm a business's reputation and customer trust (Mihus & Korzhevskiy, 2022). Negative word-of-mouth and the threshold of negative reviews can significantly affect product sales and reputation (Huang, 2016). Customers are increasingly cautious of inauthentic brand representations on social media, leading to reduced trust and purchase intention (Mihus & Korzhevskiy, 2022). Maintaining authenticity and transparency is crucial for businesses to build and retain customer trust (Huang, 2016; Mihus & Korzhevskiy, 2022).

Further research is still needed to determine how digital marketing channels including email marketing, search engine marketing, and social media marketing affect consumer purchasing behavior in Malaysia. While studies have examined the effectiveness of these channels in influencing consumer behavior and buying decisions in various contexts (e.g Kurdi et al., 2022; Omar & Atteya, 2020, Madhuyella & Daniel, 2022; Ramesh & Vidya, 2019; Sigar et al., 2021), there is a lack of research specifically focusing on the Malaysian market. The majority of Malaysian research on consumer buying decisions concentrate on one particular type of digital marketing

channel, such as social media marketing (e.g., Hamdan & Zhen, 2021; Shien et al., 2023; Konar et al., 2020; Yang & Wong, 2022). However, there aren't enough research looking at how email and search engine marketing affect consumer buying decisions in Malaysia. Understanding the specific impact of these digital marketing channels on consumer buying decisions in Malaysia is crucial for marketers to optimize their strategies and allocate resources effectively. Additionally, critical issues faced by customers related to these channels as mentioned before, need to be explored to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts in influencing consumer decision-making.

Thus, this study aims to address this knowledge gap by examining the impact of key digital marketing channels, including email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing, on the consumer buying decision. Understanding the role of these channels in shaping consumer decisions has important implications for businesses seeking to optimize their marketing strategies and maximize sales revenue in the digital era. This paper is organized into several sections; the next section (Section 2.0) reviews the literature related to the consumer buying decision, digital marketing, hypothesis development and conceptual research framework. Section 3.0 explains the methods applied in this study. The section after discusses the results of the research, and the final section is the conclusion.

II. Literature Review

Consumer Buying Decision

The consumer buying process (also known as the buying decision process) is the path that a consumer takes before purchasing a product until after the purchase is completed. When a consumer is considering a purchase, they often go through five stages: problem or need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase behavior (Nagaraja & Girish, 2016). Figure 1 below shows the process of consumer buying decision step by step where during the decision-making process for a product, the buyer can use all five stages. It's possible that the buyer will skip one or more steps; it all relies on the buyer's mindset (Qazzafi, 2019).



Figure1: 5 stages model of the consumer buying decision process (Engel et al.,1968)

The five steps of the consumer buying decision process which includes, need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior often followed by consumers when making purchases. The customer has complete control over when to finish the process and whether to buy anything. The way a consumer progresses through these stages may change based on their prior experience, area of interest, and circumstance. It is widely acknowledged that knowing consumers' demands, buying habits, and decision-making processes is essential to effective marketing (Karnreungsiri and Praditsuwan, 2018). According to Qazzafi (2019), the buyer can utilize all five stages when deciding on a product. Consumers' decision-making processes are not always rigorous, step-by-step, as Kotler and Armstrong (2018) note. Depending on their personal preferences, past experiences, and level of engagement with the product, customers can skip or reverse a step. Similarly, Solomon et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of considering individual differences and psychological processes in understanding consumer decisions. Emotional capacity, level of involvement, and situational factors can influence whether consumers skip or facilitate products. Shiffman and Kanuck (2020) also emphasized that consumers may use different decision-making strategies based on different factors, degree of involvement, and personal preferences. They can also skip or combine sections based on their mental abilities and preferences. This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of various digital marketing channels on consumer purchase decisions, counting needs analysis, information search, options analysis, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior Typical digital marketing strategies By analyzing how each category is affected, the study aims to improve the understanding of how companies can effectively use digital marketing to improve and ultimately their customers' shopping experience business results have been improved. The importance of the study is that it provides valuable insight into the complexity and dynamics of consumer decision-making in the digital age.

Digital Marketing Channels

Digital marketing is a type of marketing that uses internet-connected devices to engage with customers where all electronic or electrical equipment, as well as electronic media, are used in digital marketing to market or promote products, services, or brands to the customers (Kaushik, 2019). Past studies have shown that digital marketing is widely used in most organizations from big industries to small retailers. Even the first step in digitization, internet service, has been proved to provide considerable benefits to businesses, including the ability

to reach new target audiences, improve performance and efficiency, and boost growth and competitiveness (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015).

There are several types of digital marketing that have been utilized by organizations where every type of digital marketing has its own traits and dynamics that must be comprehended to choose efficient marketing approaches and strategies. According to Key (2017), in the sharing economy, the most popular and commonly utilized digital marketing channels are described and grouped into three domains: email, social media, and search engine marketing. These domains represent the digital marketing industry, which has been a crucial driver of sharing economy growth tactics. This is especially true for those who rely on Internet technology to match products and services to providers and consumers. Hence this study focused on these three types of digital marketing which are email marketing, social media marketing and search engine marketing.

The first type is email marketing which is known as a possible method for information sharing, and it is a growing phenomenon to communicate product information. Email marketing allows businesses and consumers to communicate with one another (Kimixay et al., 2019) and at the point when the message about the product or service is sent through email to the current or expected buyer, it is characterized as email marketing. Next is social media marketing which is the use of social media channels to promote a business and its products. It is a computer-based instrument that permits individuals to make, trade thoughts, data and pictures about the organization's product or services. There are several types of social media promoting networks include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ (Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2014). Most organization prefer to use social media as their marketing tools as social media marketing lowers costs while increasing reach to customers.

The last type of digital marketing channel is search engine marketing is the way toward influencing the perceivability of a site or a page in a web search tool's "normal" or un-paid ("natural") list items (Velayudham & Rose, 2019). The term search engine marketing refers to a collection of marketing techniques aimed at enhancing the likelihood of obtaining high-quality website traffic via search engines (Velayudham & Rose, 2019). In general, the prior (or higher positioned on the indexed lists page), and more regularly a site shows up in the search item list, the more guests it will get from the search engine customers. It might target various types of searches including picture search, local search, video search, academic hunt, news search and industry-explicit vertical search engines (Yasmin et al., 2015).

Hypothesis development

Despite the proliferation of digital marketing channels, email marketing remains a widely used and effective tool for businesses to reach and engage with their customers. According to a study by Radicati Group (2021), there were over 4.1 billion email users worldwide in 2021, and this number is expected to grow to 4.5 billion by 2025. This indicates the potential impact that email marketing can have on the consumer buying decision process. Previous studies exploring the influence of email marketing on consumer purchase decisions have yielded inconsistent results. These discrepancies can be attributed to variations in research methodologies, sample sizes, and the specific products or services under investigation (Zhang et al., 2017; Baky & Refaat, 2016). For instance, Omar and Atteya (2020) and Khan and Iftikhar (2017) focused on Egyptian and Pakistani consumers respectively, examining the impact of email marketing across different sectors. In contrast, Saeed's study (2023) delved into the effectiveness of email marketing in terms of customer retention. The findings revealed that email marketing serves as a valuable tool for establishing connections with potential clients, keeping existing customers well-informed, and fostering client loyalty. Notably, Baky and Refaat (2016) highlighted the dearth of empirical research pertaining to email newsletters and their varying levels of effectiveness. Moreover, personalization within email marketing has shown promising outcomes. Personalized emails have garnered higher open rates compared to non-personalized ones (Statista, 2021). This suggests that tailored messages can positively influence consumer buying decisions by enhancing engagement. Based on this compelling evidence, it can be inferred that email marketing possesses the capability to significantly impact consumer purchasing choices. Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: Email marketing has a significant impact on consumer buying decision.

Social media has become an essential part of people's everyday lives, with billions of active users across the globe (Hootsuite & We Are Social, 2021). This underscores the immense potential of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchasing choices. Platforms provide a range of tools like sponsored posts, influencer marketing, and customer reviews, enabling businesses to establish a more personal and genuine connection with their target audience. According to a study conducted by GlobalWebIndex (2019), 54% of social media users employ these platforms for product research, while 43% make direct purchases through social media. This indicates that social media not only influences consumer buying decisions but also streamlines the purchasing process itself. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of social media marketing may differ based on factors such as the target audience's perception of the promoted product or service (Lemel, 2021). Another study by Garg et al. (2022) highlights how social media serves as an impactful marketing tool that positively shapes consumer decisions, particularly in times of crises like pandemics. When it comes to social media analytics, marketers heavily depend

on it to gain a deeper understanding of their target audience (Mekic & Zerdo-Puljic, 2021). The quality of content plays a vital role in this regard as it directly impacts consumer engagement and ultimately determines the success of social media marketing efforts (Lemel, 2021). Hence, we can infer that social media marketing possesses the power to sway consumers' purchasing choices. This hypothesis is supported by the following statement:

H2: Social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer buying decision.

Search engine marketing (SEM) has become an increasingly important tool for businesses to reach potential customers. According to a study by eMarketer (2021), global advertising expenditure on search ads is expected to reach \$135 billion by 2024. This shows the significant impact of SEM on consumer buying decisions around. Key (2017), Yasmin et al. (2015), and Akter and Sultana (2020) have found a positive impact of SEM on consumers' buying decisions. This can be due to the fact that search engines can provide users with a wealth of information about the products or services they are interested in. This information can include reviews, pricing, and product information, to help customers build appropriate decisions to increase their confidence in their purchasing options. Additionally, SEM enables companies to target specific keywords and demographics, making it easier to reach potential customers who are actively searching for related products or services. This increases the chances that the marketing message will resonate with the audience and ultimately influence their purchase decision. Based on the above evidence, we can conclude that SEM has a significant impact on consumer buying decision. Therefore, it can be proposed that:

H3: Search engine marketing has a significant impact on consumer buying decision.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, this study aims to investigate the impact of selected types of digital marketing channels on consumer buying decision. To achieve this, a conceptual framework has been developed, as depicted in Figure 2. The framework consists of three independent variables: email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing, which are hypothesized to have a positive impact on the dependent variable, consumer buying decision. The study will examine the impact of these digital marketing channels on the consumer buying decision process. The conceptual framework provides a visual representation of the research focus and will guide the data collection and analysis process to address the research questions.



Figure 2: Conceptual Research Framework

III. Methodology

In this section, research design, target population and sample size, sampling method, data collection, survey instrument, and data analysis to study the different marketing channels influencing consumer buying decision in the online shopping market in Johor, Malaysia. The study used a quantitative approach, specifically a correlational research design. According to the E-Commerce Consumer Survey (2018), the e-commerce consumer population in Johor is 26.5% of the total population, which translates to about 927,500 consumers so the population in this study is 1,000,000 shoppers online from Johor, Malaysia. A sample size of 384 online shoppers in Johor was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table and selected via non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections.

Section A pertains to the respondents' demographic information, such as age, education level, marital status, race, and occupational status. Section B covers questions on digital marketing channels, with 5 items on email marketing (Omar and Atteya, 2020; Kaushik, 2019), 6 items on search engine marketing (Kaushik, 2019), and 4 items on social media marketing (Kaushik, 2019). Section C comprises 10 items on consumer buying decisions adapted from Omar and Atteya (2020) and Kaushik (2019). Both Sections B and C used 5-point Likert scale

questions ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data were analyzed using SPSS software for descriptive and multiple regression analyses.

IV. Results and Discussion

The questionnaire was distributed to people who lives in Johor and the survey was conducted by using convenience sampling method. Online platform such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram were utilized to distribute the questionnaire. Total number of 507 questionnaire were distributed through all three platforms but there were only 230 questionnaires were answered by the respondent which did not attain the target population of 384 respondent and this is also equivalent to only 59.9 percentage of overall target. The majority of respondents were male, with 53.5% of the total responses, while 46.5% of the responses were from female respondents. This indicates that the sample had a slightly higher representation of male participants. When it comes to age, the highest proportion of respondents was from the age range of 29-39 years old, accounting for more than half of the total respondents at 51.3%. This suggests that this age group is more likely to participate in online shopping in Johor, Malaysia. The second highest proportion of respondents was from the age range of 18-29 years old, accounting for 23% of the total respondents, followed by the age range of 40-49 years old with 19.6%. The age range of 50 and above had the lowest representation, with only 6.1% of the total respondents.

In this study, a Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 1. The findings indicate that the Cronbach's alpha values for email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, and consumer buying decision ranged from 0.752 to 0.943. These values surpass the acceptable threshold of 0.6, demonstrating satisfactory levels of reliability for the measured variables.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha value)

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha value
E-mail marketing (EM)	5	0.943
Search engine marketing (SEM)	6	0.942
Social media marketing (SMM)	4	0.752
Consumer buying decision (CBD)	10	0.923

The link between the dependent variable and the independent factors was investigated using multiple regression analysis. This study employed multiple regression to determine whether consumer buying decision can be predicted by the factors or predictors chosen which are email marketing, search engine marketing and social media marketing. The dependent variable and the independent variables must have a linear relationship. The intercept and significance level are calculated using multiple regression analysis. A significance level of 0.05 is commonly used as a reference to accept or reject the null hypothesis (Davidson & Carlin, 2008; Hatem et al., 2022; Shi & Yin, 2018). The null hypothesis is rejected if the obtained p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 corresponds to a 95% confidence level.

The results of the multiple regression analysis, presented in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4, revealed important insights into the relationship between search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing (SMM), and email marketing (EM) on consumer buying decisions (CBD). Controlling for other factors, the analysis demonstrated significant impacts for SEM and SMM, while EM did not show a significant relationship with CBD. Specifically, SEM exhibited a significant positive impact on CBD ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that as SEM increases by one unit, CBD is expected to increase by 0.681 units, holding other variables constant. Similarly, SMM demonstrated a significant positive impact on CBD ($\beta = 0.213$, $p < 0.05$). Consequently, an increase of one unit in SMM is associated with an expected increase in CBD by 0.213 units, when other variables are kept constant. However, the analysis did not find a significant relationship between EM and CBD ($\beta = -0.002$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting that EM does not play a substantial role in influencing consumer buying decisions. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 395.031$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the combination of SEM, SMM, and EM explains a substantial portion of the variance in CBD. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.840 signifies that 84% of the variance in CBD can be accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that SMM and SEM are important predictors of CBD, while EM does not significantly contribute to the prediction of CBD. Consequently, we reject hypothesis H1 (relating to EM) but accept hypothesis H2 (relating to SEM) and H3 (relating to SMM) as supported by the analysis.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.916a	0.840	0.838	0.30896	0.840	395.031	3	226	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), SMM, SEM, EM

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	113.124	3	37.708	395.031	.000b
Residual	21.573	226	.095		
Total	134.697	229			

a. Dependent Variable: CBD

b. Predictors: (Constant), SMM, SEM, EM

Table 4: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	0.528	0.112		4.718	0.000	0.307	0.748
EM	-0.002	0.025	-0.002	-.064	0.949	-0.051	0.047
SEM	0.681	0.027	0.793	25.380	0.000	0.628	0.734
SMM	0.213	0.035	0.223	6.041	0.000	0.144	0.283

a. Dependent Variable: CBD

V. Discussion

It is worth noting that only email marketing was found to be statistically insignificant in this study, with a p-value of 0.949 exceeding the chosen significance level of 0.05. This indicates that email marketing doesn't have a significant impact on the consumer's buying decision. This result is fundamentally in line with the previous relevant studies. For example, a study by Zhang et al. (2017) found that email-active customers are not necessarily active in purchases, and vice versa, and that the number of emails sent by the retailer has a nonlinear effect on both. Another study from HubSpot cited by Torres et al. (2018) found that only 13% said promotional emails had a positive impact on purchase decisions, while 64% said no impact at all. According to Rosario (2021), it has been emphasized that email marketing might not have the same impact on customer acquisition and retention as other marketing channels such as social media and search engine optimization. Additionally, Fariborzi (2012) discovered that obtaining a respectful response from email research and direct marketing can be quite challenging. These findings suggest that in the present market, email marketing may not be an effective means for customers to make purchase decisions. When it comes to the effectiveness of email marketing, it is important to consider various factors such as the industry, target audience, and specific marketing strategies employed. Therefore, conducting further research and analysis is advisable to evaluate the influence of email marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in a specific context. In general, although email marketing can be a valuable tool for businesses to connect with their customers, its impact on consumer buying decisions may not always be significant.

The study revealed a remarkable correlation between search engine marketing and consumer purchasing behavior, as evidenced by the substantial beta value of 0.793. This implies that search engine marketing holds the utmost sway over consumers' buying decisions. Such findings serve as valuable insights for companies aiming to enhance their marketing strategies and optimize resource allocation for maximum ROI. Additionally, the results established a strong and positive association between search engine marketing and consumer purchase decisions, affirming the second hypothesis. Search engine marketing, also known as inbound marketing, is a powerful tool that not only attracts customers to brands but also entices them to make purchases (Usman, 2020). Extensive research has demonstrated the positive impact of search engine marketing on consumer buying decisions (Pujianto and Hartono, 2023; Naik & Bhosale, 2023; Li et al., 2018; Madhuyella & Daniel, 2022; Kalyan, 2022; Izakova et al., 2021, Kurdi et al., 2022; Veluyadham & Rose, 2019; Mujahidin et al., 2022). As a result, search engine

marketing is becoming increasingly popular as a vital strategy for customer acquisition (Khosla & Harish, 2017; Naik & Bhosale, 2023). For instance, Pujianto and Hartono (2023) discovered that digital marketing techniques such as search engine indicators, website optimization, email campaigns, and social media advertising have a significant and positive impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases. According to Kaushik (2019), search engine marketing has been found to attract customers who are actively seeking relevant information online. Instead of immediately offering products or services for sale, search engine marketing focuses on providing solutions, assistance, or support. This research highlights the growing significance of search engines as a vital link between companies utilizing the internet to establish their brand and connect with their target audience. By effectively implementing search engine marketing strategies, companies can not only attract potential customers but also positively influence their purchasing intentions. It is crucial for companies to prioritize delivering valuable information and support through their search engine marketing initiatives rather than solely promoting products or services for sale. This approach helps in building trust and establishing the brand as a dependable source of information, which ultimately leads to increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Despite the expanding reach of digital marketing, many individuals still rely on traditional methods when making buying decisions. They often turn to search engines for gathering information and are swayed by higher-ranked products or services available.

Additionally, social media marketing had a positive and significant relationship with consumer buying decisions with a beta value of 0.223. This result is consistent with Wibowo et al. (2021), Sokhatska and Siddharth (2019) and Kim and Ko (2012). As stated by Wibowo et al. (2021), if the marketing content meets customer needs, such as appropriate product information, using social media as a marketing technique is a solid decision. Furthermore, Kim and Ko (2012) found that social media marketing activities contribute to effective marketing communication methods because the main objective of marketing communication is to enhance consumer value factors by establishing customer relationships and creating buying intent. According to Abdul Manan et al. (2020), in order to successfully engage online consumers, marketers should focus on increasing the integrity and eloquence of social media advertising. The research findings indicate that leveraging social media marketing has the potential to significantly impact consumer decision-making. To optimize the effectiveness of this strategy, businesses must ensure that their marketing content aligns with the preferences and requirements of their target audience. This approach facilitates the establishment of stronger customer relationships and enhances the likelihood of generating purchase intent. In order to achieve this, organizations can utilize social media platforms to disseminate product information, engage with customers, and obtain valuable feedback. These measures contribute towards product/service improvement and foster brand loyalty. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that social media marketing should not constitute the sole focus of a company's overall marketing strategy. Instead, it should be integrated with other marketing approaches for optimal outcomes.

VI. Conclusion

In summary, the study revealed that search engine marketing and social media marketing have a positive influence on consumer purchasing choices, while email marketing does not. These findings suggest that businesses should prioritize search engine and social media marketing in their digital marketing channels and effectively promote their brands. Additionally, delivering valuable information or assistance through these marketing efforts and establishing the brand as a trusted source of information leads to heightened customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Companies must customize their marketing campaigns to cater to the needs and preferences of their target audience. For future research, it would be intriguing to explore the effectiveness of different email marketing strategies and the impact of alternative digital marketing approaches like content marketing or influencer marketing on consumer buying decisions. It would also be beneficial to examine how digital marketing affects various industries and target markets. Furthermore, future research could delve into the specific effects of digital marketing on each stage or aspect of consumer buying decisions. To achieve profitability, marketers should focus on developing search engine optimization and social media strategies that provide valuable information or support for their target audience rather than solely emphasizing product sales. They should also ensure that their marketing content is tailored specifically to meet the needs and preferences of their target audience. By adopting these approaches, marketers can establish strong customer relationships, enhance the likelihood of generating purchase intent, and ultimately drive customer buying decisions. Additionally, marketers should integrate different digital marketing techniques to maximize their effectiveness and allocate their resources effectively.

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