A Multi-Channel Digital Marketing Approach to Enhance Brand Awareness and Purchase Intentions in Emerging Firms

Sohaib Uz Zaman[1], Haiqa Tabassum[2] & Syed Hasnain Alam[3]

[1]Assistant Professor, Karachi University Business School, University of Karachi, Email: sohaibuzzaman@uok.edu.pk, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0135-3292
[2]Karachi University Business School, University of Karachi, Email: haiqa.tabassum15@gmail.com
[3]Karachi University Business School, University of Karachi, Email: hasnainalam@gmail.com, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5008-7365

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT

The research analyzes how emerging firms experience brand attitude and purchase intention changes from using multi-channel digital marketing approaches SEO and SMM and CM and EM. The literature gap regarding digital marketing receives comprehensive study through assessing these approaches for their combined effect on purchase choice which relies on psychological players including brand attitude and brand awareness. Digital consumers in Pakistan formed the subject of this research which used a quantitative survey approach and purposive sampling methodology to distribute 300 questionnaires among the population. A data analysis was conducted with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) executed through SmartPLS 4.0. The model examination employed validated measure scales and assessed both direct effects as well as indirect effects that included mediated relationships and modulating factors. The study showed that content marketing and email marketing produced the greatest effect on brand attitude (β = 0.60 and β = 0.61) before brand attitude drove purchase intention at β = 0.45. The analysis demonstrated that brand awareness did not exhibit strong statistical moderation thus showing that consumer perception stands above brand visibility importance. The investigation combines Agile Marketing and COBRA frameworks in developing practical recommendations for marketers to concentrate on value-centered and emotionally driven involvement across different platforms.

Introduction

Marketing has now completely changed from the traditional ways to the interactional and data based marketing, which is widely used in the marketing especially by the emerging firms who use the digital platforms to promote their brands and to interact with their consumers (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Putri, 2021). Accordingly, digital marketing is today a strategic imperative, the deployment of multiple channel that brings together SEO, content marketing, social media and email marketing to improve the customer engagement and the brand visibility (Coresight Research, 2020; Verhoef et al., 2021). Effective multi-channel strategies can enhance tremendously the brand awareness, a key aspect in emerging businesses in a competitive environment (Kapferer, 2008; Dabbous & Barakat, 2020).

Digital marketing efforts create brand attitude this in turn imparts consumer perception and buys consumer intention (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022). In the cases of B2B as it is necessary to show credibility (Ajina & Tvaronavičienė, 2019; Giao et al., 2020), engaging content and trustworthy communications can cultivate positive brand attitudes. Given that personalized digital marketing campaigns have been shown to contribute to positive consumer intent (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Hameed el al., 2020), emerging firms in particular require the understanding of the brand awareness, attitude and purchase intention interplay.

However, much of the digital marketing research still fails to explain how together, different multi-channel strategies affect the brand awareness and the purchase intention, especially with emerging resource constrained firms (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022) or, resource constrained firms (Putri, 2021). In this regard, this study is designed to fill in those gaps with the developing of a framework that look at the combined effects of multiple digital marketing channels and respective theories (Ajzen, 1991; Kotler et al., 2007).

The digital marketing wave is so powerful that the global market has the ability to thrive (Statista, 2024). Strategies to build brand equity and drive sales, in the recent times of the COVID-19 pandemic have also emerged due to which emerging firms have taken to digital cost-effective strategies to sustain the business (Verma & Yadav, 2023). Nevertheless, the obstacles such as the data privacy and the content saturation still exist and require a diversified digital marketing approach for the ongoing participation and competitive advantage (Krings et al., 2021; Deloitte, 2023).

Literature Review

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), has now emerged as one of the major digital marketing strategies in improving the visibility and the traffic to a website through online content optimization and website structure with high organic search rankings (Chalil et al., 2022; Nguyen and Nhu, 2022). As it is highly cost effective and allows credibility building, the first is particularly beneficial for emerging firms especially that higher search rankings most of the time are correlated with brand reliability (Dabbous and Barakat, 2022). It also helps SEO has a consequence in brand engagement and trust since it increases exposure of relevant content (De Corniere & de Nijs, 2016; Kamis & Stohr, 2006).

The content marketing is creating valuable content to attract and retain audiences in order to build a thought leadership and educate the consumer (Silbert Jose, 2021; Sudarsono et al., 2020). The quality content helps in emerging firms differentiating themselves and the trust and engagement of the people through the high quality content (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022). Research has shown a vivid

impact on brand preference if the address to customer pains points (Hays et al., 2013; Kiráľová & Pavlíček, 2015).

Finally, email marketing continues to be a very powerful lever for customer retention, but especially in the B2B contexts, because it allows a direct and also more engaging communication through the personalized campaigns (Goic et al., 2021; Samantaray & Pradhan, 2020). Segmented email campaigns are proven to increase the conversion rate (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dash et al., 2021).

According to Kapferer (2008), Martín-Consuegra et al. (2019), today brand awareness is measured through digital metrics. Digital strategies become the tool of emerging firms to amplify awareness of their brand (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Putri, 2021). Consistent messaging with emotional resonance to brand attitude has a big impact in the consumer decision making (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Giao et al., 2020).

Emerging firms in order to influence purchase intention, have to build brand trust and perceived value and establish emotional connections through multi-channel marketing (Hameed et al., 2020; Peña-García et al., 2020). The Theory of Planned Behavior and Consumer Behavior Theory point out that purchase intent is driven by psychological factors (Ajzen, 1991; Kotler et al., 2007; Verma & Yadav, 2023; Chalil et al., 2022).

Introduction to Theories and Models

Constructs of theoretical models are needed to be integrated in marketing research to systematically explain consumer behaviors, decision making processes and the way corporate branding strategies affect marketers. Theories and frameworks in the digital marketing help explain the interaction of consumers with various channels and how the brand may enhance the communication with touchpoints for engagement and conversion (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Giao et al., 2020). In view to digitalization surge, adaptive frameworks have been required to engage with new consumption habits said Verhoef et al. (2021), Dabbous & Barakat (2022). Agile Marketing and COBRA, and most foundational models, such as Consumer Behavior Theory (Kotler et al., 2007) are complementary in the offering of different perspectives. Marketers can use these theories to get a grasp of what is influencing the consumer choice but even more, how engagement plays out in a digital interconnected world.

Consumer Behavior Theory

Consumer Behaviour Theory describes how people decide to use their time, money, effort etc to consume things. According to Kotler et al. (2007), this is break down the decision-making process in five important stages such as need recognition, information search, evaluation of the alternatives available for choosing, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. Given that they can now access an abundance of content across platforms, consumers' behaviour and the determination of marketing tactics to leverage future purchase processes have been changed by digital tools that disrupt traditional marketing touchpoints (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Chalil et al., 2022). Many studies indicate that emerging companies can then shape their content marketing and SEO activities so that they partially fit these stages and, partly, take users closer towards a purchase decision (Putri, 2021; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). For that reason, the model continues to be a strong primary tool with which to examine how multi-channel digital strategies are effective.

Agile Marketing Framework

Inspired from Agile software development, Agile Marketing Framework is also an iterative execution, real time feedback, and customer centric planning for the marketing campaigns. The word 'Agile' comes for responsive and data driven decision making, which matches perfectly with the characteristic of the tenants of the digital fast changing land scape (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). Agile practices give marketer in emerging firms space to test SEO keywords, change email copy, and even rework social media content based on immediate metrics of engagement (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022). Agile is a great way to leverage marketing touch points on a user analytics basis, therefore, it is an important strategic asset for brand and conversion goal accomplishment (Dash et. al, 2021; Kim and Ko, 2010). By integrating the Agile principles into the framework, digital efforts from multiple digital channels are also continually being refined and synchronized.

COBRA (Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities) Model

Even though Muntiga et al. (2011) introduced the COBRA model that categorizes online consumer behaviors into three tiers (consumption, contribution, and creation of brand related content), no rules exist to allocate a share of spend to an advertising medium. When we think about this in the realm of digital, it is essential for us to understand how people are consuming marketing content within these Instagram and YouTube and email newsletters. For example, recent studies pay attention to brand related activity, such as commenting, reviewing or reposting, which directly increase awareness and impact on other people's perception and intention to this brand (Giao et al., 2020 and Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). For the emerging firm, the encouraging active participation may results in organic reach, peer based credibility and increase in brand engagement (Nguyen and Nhu, 2022; Chalil et al., 2020). Analyzing the impacts of consumer behavior in each channel on shape of their brand attitude and purchasing outcomes is then enabled by integrating the COBRA model in the framework.

Mediation and Moderation Perspectives

Brand attitude is mediated by the influence of digital marketing such as SEO, content marketing and social media on consumer's buying behavior. Emotional and cognitive engagement via high quality content is a crucial interpretive filter on digital stimuli for brand attitude to the extent that (Nguyen and Nhu, 2022; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). However, as shown by MacKenzie & Lutz (1989), Royle & Laing (2014) similar positive brand attitudes raise the probability of further consumer actions. There are many digital marketing strategies that would help building a brand awareness such as SEO that elevates the visibility and social media that improves organic reach (Chalil et al., 2022; Silbert Jose, 2021). In addition, content marketing improves the recall of audiences by brand (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). However, simply seeing content does not ensure that users will develop meaningful brand association as they can bypass promotional content (Kim & Ko, 2010; Royle & Laing, 2014). Because of this, the effect that digital marketing has on awareness will vary from quality and engagement of the content.
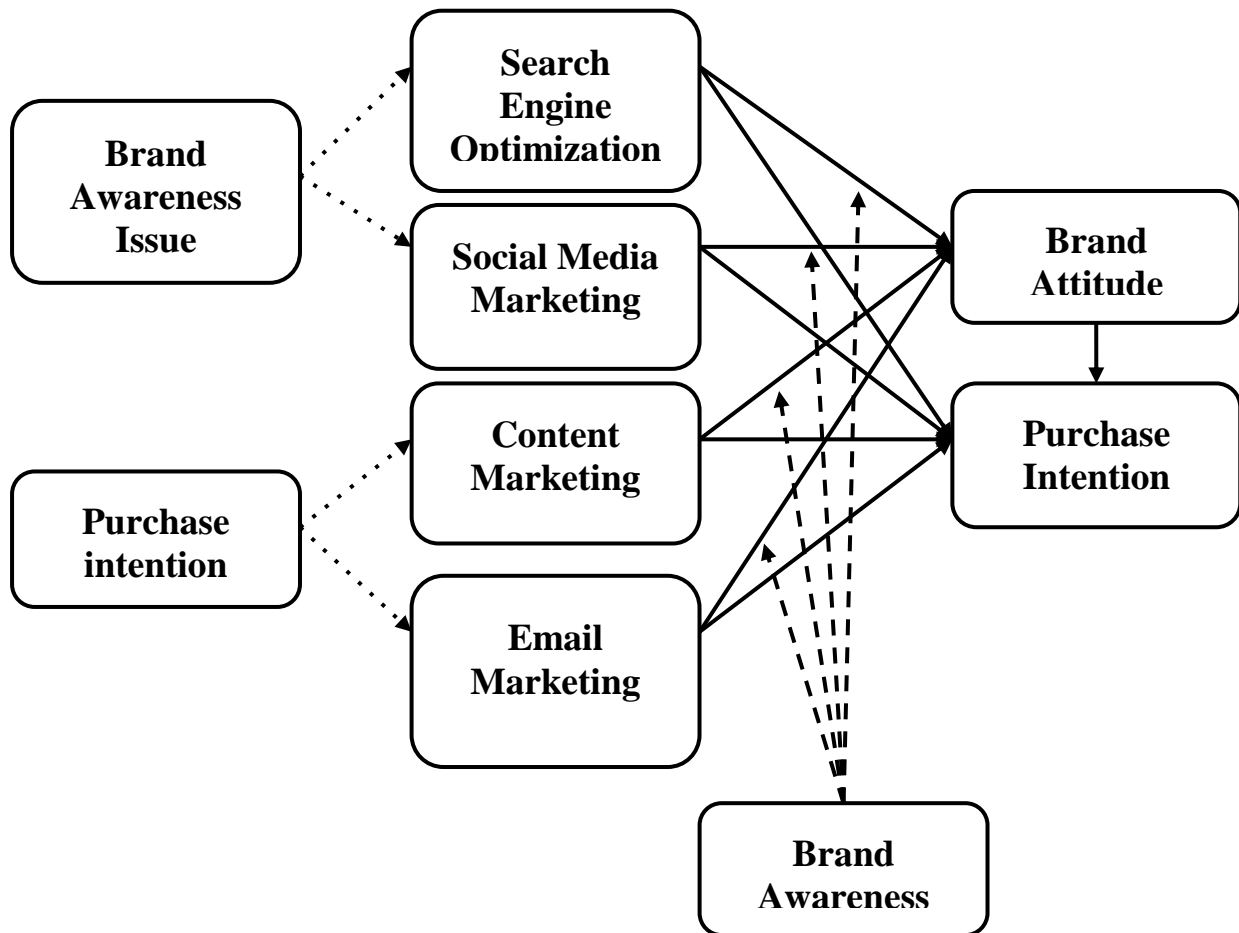
Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Hypothesis Development

Search Engine Optimization and Brand Attitude

SEO has emerged as a vital strategic tool in today's marketing where the impact of the perception of a brand by the consumers cannot be over emphasized. A company's website, when showing up in search results in the top of the search-list, increases perceived credibility and trust (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Verhoef et al., 2021). It makes an impression that customers assume that you are an authoritative brand as they think that you have a high ranking. This is supported by Chalil et al. (2022), who state that SEO optimized content usually carries useful information to the consumers, increasing the level of consumer engagement. Earlier (De Corniere & de Nijs, 2016) the brand visibility through SEO also resulted in higher trust level and cognitive brand processing, resulting in positive sentiment towards the brand.

H1: Search engine optimization has a major positive effect on brand attitude.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Attitude

Social media marketing (SMM) allows for dynamic interaction that allows for the formation and thickening of brand attitudes. Brands can use storytelling, community engagement and visual content to surf on the wave of emotions that users feel (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). This is done by COBRA and demonstrates that brand activity on social media will

influence how the consumer perceives brands, such as neutral to positive (Lou & Yuan, 2019). According to recent evidence, brand narratives and responsiveness to social media channels are important for more positive brands evaluations and readiness to be loyal (Kapoor et al., 2021).

H2: social media marketing has a high positive effect on brand attitude.

Content Marketing and Brand Attitude

When it comes to brand attitude, convincing content marketing comes into play to influence attitude through education, storytelling, and thought leadership. If we decide that high quality blog posts, case studies, infographics contribute to a better perception of a brand, being seen as credible and knowledgeable, this should reflect on the consumer characteristics of trustworthiness and knowledgeability (Sudarsono et al., 2020; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). Nguyen & Nhu (2022) discovered that when clients connect with data, the brand estimation turns out positively. Earlier Kotler et al. (2007) have highlighted that brand messages in contents helpful will influence emotional and cognitive appraisals.

H3: Content marketing has a significant positive effect on brand attitude.

Email Marketing and Brand Attitude

Here, Email marketing is still an effective way to foster and continue to maintain a good brand attitude, when personalized and on time which is. Emails containing offers that are not just for dollars, but also for emotional attachment through the ideas of exclusive deals, personalized recommendations, or educational content, are of importance in relation to emotional engagement, and trust (Samantaray & Pradhan, 2020; Goic et al., 2021). Yet, irrelevant or over email marketing can work against it, making people annoyed to opt out of email marketing and having negative feelings towards email marketing.

H4: marketing has a strong positive effect on the brand attitude.

Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

In digital environments with consumers who make purchase decisions based on perceptions rather than preferences, brand attitude is a highly important predictor of purchase intention. Usually, a favorable brand attitude is the result of a strong emotional and cognitive bond leading to a purchasing behavior (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). Digital content is also meaningful because as Lou & Yuan (2019) assert, brand attitude acts as a psychological mechanism which characterizes digital content into meaning and encourages consumer's willingness to buy. This link is supported by earlier research (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) that finds attitude toward the ad and brand to be notably related to the probability of consumer action.

H5: Purchase intention does have significant positive effect on brand attitude.

Search Engine Optimization and Brand Awareness

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) raises a company's opposition across the different search engines and they earn brand awareness. Users also see a brand over and over again in search results and want to remember and recognize a brand, which enhances memory encoding of the brand (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). Chalil et al. (2022) also support the

argument that the SEO amplifies digital footprints for the emerging firms to jump into existence without spending mammoth ad spend. De Corniere & de Nijs (2016) had previously shown how a high ranking in the SERP has lasting impact on consumer brand familiarity and recall which is why SEO needs to be combined with valuable content to actually have any impact on awareness.

H6: Brand awareness is highly positively affected by search engine optimization.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Awareness

Social media marketing is an effective tool for the branding of a brand and if you are a brand with just inception, is the best marketing tool to establish a digital presence. Brands can quickly and cheaply attract a huge audience through virally, contributed to, and partnered with influencer content (Nguyen and Nhu, 2022; Verma and Yadav, 2023). According to Martín-Consuegra et al. (2021), the interactive property of social media enhances visibility and the possibility of sharing the brand. SMM's effectiveness in increasing awareness through frequent, visual and community oriented content is also supported past research by Michaelidou et al. (2011).

H7: social media marketing significantly affects brand awareness

Content Marketing and Brand Awareness

Here's how a good content marketer can build your business brand awareness through value, education, and ranking. Shareability, time spent on site and helpful to long term brand memory increases with high quality content (Silbert Jose, 2021; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). As claimed by Nguyen & Nhu (2022), bookmarking, sharing, and revisiting are more likely when the content is engaging and relevant so this increases the number of touch points to potential customers. Kiráľová & Pavlíček (2015) mentioned earlier that improving brand recognition is achieved through informational value of the content as a strategic advantage. Moreover, poorly distributed content as lacking in strategic SEO tagging or weak call to action will be unnoticed and its awareness impact will be muted (Krings et al., 2021; Royle and Laing, 2014).

H6: It is very possible that the effect of content marketing on brand awareness is very positive.

Email Marketing and Brand Awareness

Email marketing promotes including brand awareness with a personal, direct communication that reinforces the brand recall and visibility through time. Branding cues such as the logos and similar email messaging, help in developing familiarity of the brand and ensure a top of mind presence of the brand (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Samantaray & Pradhan, 2020). However, Goic et al. (2021) indicate that sending regular email campaigns especially targeted to user interests increase the open and engagement rates as well as the brand exposure. The second confirmation that email works well at reinforcing awareness, McCloskey (2006), also found, is strong when repeated contact cycles make no difference. Too many emails, even if some of them are personalized, will cause users to either associate that brand with intrusion or irrelevance. Royle & Laing (2014) also suggest that email marketing cannot influence awareness unless it is strategically segmented and timed and will be at best ineffective or worse when it is not.

H9: Email marketing has a positive effect of tremendous importance on brand awareness.

Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention as Search Engine Optimization

Apart from improving the visibility, SEO is important in shaping the brand attitude, which subsequently affects the purchase intention. Users will have positive perceptions of the brand when they find the well ranked, relevant and informative content through search engines (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Chalil et al., 2022). These favorable attitudes are a critical factor is increasing the chance of returning or buying from the brand. Dabbous & Barakat (2022) assert that SEO optimized content is a gateway to brand familiarity and trust, which are important precedents of the buying behavior. Earlier De Corniere & de Nijs (2016) found that the ranking prominence increases user trust, which then can affect actual intention to buy.

H10: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between search engine optimization and purchase intention.

Social Media Marketing, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

The social media marketing seeks interaction, conversation and emotional connection which will elevate brand attitude positively and then triggers purchase intention. Research supports that users are more likely to develop a trust, and eventually purchase, when social platforms are engaging and transparent through the brand, regardless if the post was positive or negative, as long as it was creative and transparent (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). Lou & Yuan (2019) argue that brand related social media content helps user brand relationship such that it aids cognitive–affective–conative model of behavioural response. According to Kapoor et al. (2021), the fact of interactive content being able to greatly influence buying decisions comes by first affecting brand perceptions.

However, the impact of SMM on forming attitudes and hence purchase intentions is very much dependent on authenticity and relevance. Indifference or skepticism to over-promotional or low value content (Krings, T.W., Iyer, G., & Mukherjee, A., 2021; Verhoef, P.C., Pederzoli, D., Capaldo, S., Yannopoulos, P., & Giannelli, G., 2021). mail that, and only mail that, is value driven, consumer centric, and that is consistent quality, then social media posts will not cause a dementia in the minds of the consumers and they may not translate in Starview's ibuy." (2014). Quantity or frequency matters less than quality engagement.

H11: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

Content Marketing, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

They bring educational or entertaining material to the table then encourage purchase intention by essentially shaping how customers feel about a brand. It shows the brand's brand credibility, you are the thought leader, and people cream you as a brand and the high quality content creates a positive attitude as per (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). In Giao et al. (2020), they find that when the user perceives the content as useful and engaging, the evaluation of the brand becomes more favorable, and tend to start purchasing. Patterns similar to those found in early research in tourism and hospitality brands were detected by Kiráľová & Pavlíček (2015). Contending brands with the same content, no matter how unique, emotional, or interactive, can easily lose the brand share or simply lose the customers. In one of such cases, Royle & Laing (2014) posit that content might even inspire awareness, but does not serve as mediator between awareness and formation of attitude leading to intent.

H12: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between content marketing and purchase intention.

Email Marketing, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

Contrary to a blanket, untargeted email marketing, email that is personalized and relevant will stimulate consistent brand touchpoint and thus favourable purchase behavior. Through emails, content could appeal to customer relationships and make them feel being recognized and valued more when the email content is segmented and tailored (Goic et al., 2021; Samantaray & Pradhan, 2020). As per Nguyen & Nhu (2022), email interactions provide familiarity between supplier and the consumer, thus preparing the latter to act. Similarly, McCabe (2006) unconditional found that strong branding of emails builds trust that predicts later purchases.

H13: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between email marketing and purchase intention.

Purchase Intention (Moderated by Brand Awareness) Search Engine Optimization

SEO may be more effective or less effective depending on to what extent a consumer already has brand awareness. Users that know a brand have more faith in its organic rankings and have higher probability of conversion after interaction (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). If Brand's website is brought to the user via SEO, then high brand awareness can serve as a credibility amplifier as the user is familiarized with the Brand, and the decision process is shortened (Chalil et al., 2022). De Corniere & de Nijs (2016) have earlier said that brand recognized users consider top ranking listings more trustworthy, especially if they remembered the previous exposure.

(H14): Brand awareness moderates the relationship between SEO and purchase intention in the sense that the path is stronger when brand awareness is higher.

Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention (Moderated by Brand Awareness)

Social media marketing efforts are strengthened beyond the intended purchase intention when the consumers are already aware of the brand because familiar brands are able to attract and engage more consumers on their social (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Martíin-Consuegra et al., 2021). Authentic content can certainly attract the audience, but when the audience knows your brand and treats your brand they are more receptive to your content, offers, and calls to action. According to Lou & Yuan (2019), it only seems to be beneficial for social media campaigns if the brand already has some mental footprint, which means that the content is easier to interpret and trust.

H15: Brand awareness moderates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention, such that the relationship is stronger when brand awareness is high.

Content Marketing and Purchase Intention (Moderated by Brand Awareness)

In case consumers are aware of a brand, content marketing not only consolidates the value the brand brings but also makes more likely to purchase. It accommodates users' familiarity with detailed or educational content (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). As Silbert Jose (2021) claimed, there is an apparent intrinsic relationship between the brands utilizing content marketing and higher click through and conversion rates. Said earlier by Kiráľová & Pavlíček (2015), content resonates more because viewers have the past brand exposure. Being not attached to the awareness of brand, there is no guarantee that the user will delve in hardcore content or act upon its recommendations. It is emphasized by Verhoef et al. (2021) that brand familiarity

strengthens the users' cognitive receptivity, thus contributing to make the presented content more actionable.

H16: The relationship between content marketing and purchase intention is moderated by brand awareness, to the extent that the relationship is stronger with higher brand awareness.

Email Marketing and Purchase Intention (Moderated by Brand Awareness)

The more awareness the brand has with a recipient; the more effective email marketing is. Open rates, click throughts, and more responsiveness to purchase prompts are higher with familiar audiences (Goic et al., 2021; Samantaray & Pradhan, 2020). Known brands have higher email engagement as people recognize the sender and trust him or her, as mentioned by Nguyen & Nhu (2022). Earlier, McCloskey (2006) shows that trusted brand email communication increases the consumer action. With this, both users and their businesses will struggle to gain engagement and trust in the links, especially when privacy and cyber issues are at a high. In this sense, brand awareness moderates the effect of email marketing on outcomes that involve behavioral aspects such as purchasing.

H17: Brand awareness moderates email marketing and purchase intention interaction such that the relationship turns out stronger when the brand awareness is high.

Conceptualization

Over the past decade, marketing research has devoted much more attention on researching the impact of digital strategies on consumer behavior by introducing multi-theoretical frameworks. Consumer Behavior Theory (Kotler et al., 2007), Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), Agile Marketing Framework (Verhoef et al., 2021), and COBRA Model (Muntinga et al., 2011) have previously been utilized to understand how consumers respond to branding with regard to digital platforms. The integration of these theories is supported by recent literature by Nguyen & Nhu (2022), Dabbous & Barakat (2022) and Chalil et al. (2022) and we hypothesise that the multi-channel digital marketing (SEO, SMM, content, email) will influence brand attitude and purchase intention, moderated by brand awareness. For instance, most of the previous studies isolate one type of marketing channel or blindly disregard mediating and moderating roles of brand equity variables. It fills this gap by building an integrated conceptual model by integrating these digital strategies with the constructs related to brand perception to investigate their joint effect on consumer purchase behavior, in the context of the emerging firms in particular. This turns from theoretical underpinnings to a testable framework that is more practical approach to the question of how to think about their digital branding effectiveness today in an environment where everything is hypercompetitive.

Methodology

The study is quantitative and cross sectional and employs a digital marketing strategies (SEO, SMM, content, email) and brand related constructs (attitude and awareness) and a purchase intention relationship. The features of this design are those of objectivity and reproducibility, leading the design to be suitable for hypothesis testing along with generalization (Verma & Yadav, 2023; Nguyen & Nhu, 2022). The design represents an exploratory correlational design, which allows examining the relations among variables without experimental manipulation, and can evaluate direct, indirect as well as moderating effects (Chalil et al., 2022; Peña-García et al., 2020). Although cross sectional designs do not prove the temporal precedence, they are very good at

observing patterns and testing hypotheses on large samples in marketing context (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Krings et al., 2021).

The explanatory research design of study is adequate in supporting the study's objective to check cause effect relationship, hence specifically, how the digital marketing strategy affects the brand related variables and purchase intention (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Giao et al. 2020). Previous digital marketing literature (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Royle & Laing, 2014) indicates that this design is well suited to models of this sort that are hypothesis driven in terms of mediation and moderation effects. This study is conducted in the real world where the variables cannot be artificially manipulated and so, the design used is a non-experimental one (Goic et al., 2021; Krings et al., 2021). It increases ecological validity by providing unique data to analyze authentic consumer responses (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In order to statistically validate the conceptual framework, the study uses compact regression equations to test the influence of each digital marketing strategy on Brand Attitude.

$$M = a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + e_1$$

Next, Brand Attitude's impact on Purchase Intention (Y) is tested through:

$$Y = bM + e_2$$

To determine both direct and indirect effects, the final mediation model includes both digital strategies and Brand Attitude as predictors of Purchase Intention:

$$Y = c'_1X_1 + c'_2X_2 + c'_3X_3 + c'_4X_4 + bM + e_4$$

If the mediation path (b) is significant and the direct path (c′) is reduced, this confirms partial or full mediation.

To test moderation, Brand Awareness (Z) is introduced as an interaction term for each digital strategy in predicting Purchase Intention, e.g.,

$$Y = d_1X_1 + d_2Z + d_3(X_1 \cdot Z) + e_5$$

A significant d_3 confirms that Brand Awareness strengthens or weakens the relationship between the digital strategy and consumer intent. This compact statistical approach proves the model's structure, showing how multi-channel digital marketing affects consumer purchase intention through the mediating role of Brand Attitude and the moderating role of Brand Awareness.

Sampling

In this research, a customized quantitative cross sectional design has been used to explore the impact of different digital marketing strategies such as SEO, social media, content and email on brand attitude and purchase intention among the consumers in Pakistan. Therefore, the study does not attempt to capture consumer perceptions at a point in time, but it captures consumer

perceptions at a single point in the time saving on the cost in longitudinal studies (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Giao et al., 2020). Just like other consumer behavior, it considers a multi-path approach evaluating mediation and moderation effects using brand attitude as a mediator, and brand awareness as a moderator, taking into consideration psychological and cognitive aspects (Chalil et al., 2022; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021).

The research intends to be specialized in Pakistani digital business context whereby customized research design is carried out to address emerging firms with low cost strategies of marketing. Contextual modifications of scales concerning changes in all the variables ensure cultural relevance (Nguyen, 2022; Goic et al., 2021). The data collection procedure consists of a structured questionnaire distributed both online and face to face among digital consumers with an education background and who were known with all kinds of digital brand interaction using methods of more than 300 respondents according to SEM requisites (Hair et al., 2019; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022).

For analysis of data, SmartPLS 4 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used, which is appropriate for complicated models having many latent variables (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Peña-García et al., 2020). All constructs were confirmed to meet established thresholds; validity and reliability of the study were ensured by various checks (Hair et al., 2019). The demographic data provide data to the buy intentions and age data allow for the segmentation of consumer behavior which increases the generalizability of the findings (Krings et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021). This research assists in the understanding of the relationship of digital marketing strategies in affecting consumer attitudes and behaviors in a very competitive market.

Results and Discussion

The way in which the structural model analysis confirms that specifically Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content Marketing (CM) and Email Marketing (EM) affect the brand-related perception. All four strategies positively stimulated brand attitude in particular, email marketing and content being notable, in line with the idea that informational and prompted approaches promote association with brands on the material and enthusiastic level. Consistent with recent studies in digital marketing, it has been revealed that the content and personalization quality play a crucial role in brand favorability (Chalil et al. 2022; Giao et al. 2020). Another thing that Hair et al. (2017) and Royle & Laing (2014) also acknowledge early on is that well-structured, multiple channel outreach delivers better engagement than single channel campaigns.

Additionally, the model validates that brand attitude is an intermediary between digital strategies and purchase intention. Adding brand attitude as a psychological construct increases the explanatory power of this model and it suggests that the consumer perception mediates the marketing influence to behavioral intent (Nguyen and Nhu, 2022; Verma and Yadav, 2023). For example, user probability to purchase is highly predicted by the attitudes developed as a result of consistent brand messaging through SEO or SMM. This finding is consistent with that previous work which found that consumers' affective evaluation renders before buying behavior (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Kotler et al., 2007). For brands, this means attitude-driven marketing is a sure route to realising engagement into action, particularly in highly competitive digital channels.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
SEO	0.78	0.85	0.65
SMM	0.82	0.88	0.68
CM	0.76	0.84	0.63
EM	0.8	0.86	0.66
BA	0.85	0.89	0.7
BATT	0.83	0.87	0.67
PI	0.81	0.86	0.64

The results of the reliability analysis relating all of the key constructs used in the study are presented in Table 1. Finally, Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs are between 0.76 and 0.85, which exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70 establishing good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019). Results from Composite Reliability (CR) values are found between 0.84 of 0.89 to have the reliability of the constructs (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022) similarly and above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Muller & Thompson, 2022). Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores for all constructs exceed 0.50 threshold (0.63 – 0.70) indicating suitable level of convergent validity (Royle & Laing, 2014; Verma & Yadav, 2023). Together, these results tend to validate the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments used in the study and thus validate the robustness of the structural model.

Path Analysis (Hypothesis Testing)

Table 2: Path Analysis

Path	Beta Coefficient	T-Value	P-Value
SEO → BATT	0.5	5.2	0.000
SMM → BATT	0.39	4.1	0.001
CM → BATT	0.29	3.3	0.002
EM → BATT	0.61	6	0.000
BATT → PI	0.45	5.5	0.000
SEO → PI	0.07	1.2	0.230
SMM → PI	0.18	2	0.045
CM → PI	0.1	1.5	0.130
EM → PI	0.02	0.8	0.420

The results of path analysis are displayed in table 2 that shows the strength and significance of relationship among constructs in the proposed model. It is found that all four digital marketing strategies, SEO ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), SMM ($\beta = 0.39$, $p = 0.001$), CM ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = 0.002$), and EM ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$) have a significant positive effect on Brand Attitude (BATT). They confirm that multi-channel digital strategies create a psychological perception in consumers' psychological perception of brands. Furthermore, Buy Intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$) is significantly impacted by Brand Attitude, so the mediating role of Brand Attitude in the model is validated and consistent with previous research of the affective cognitive pathway between marketing engagement and consumer behavior.

On the other hand, when examining the direct impact of the digital marketing strategies on PI, only SMM → PI (β = 0.18, p = 0.045) is significant but only moderately. These paths (from SEO β = 0.07 (p = 0.23), CM β = 0.10 (p = 0.13), and EM β = 0.02 (p = 0.42)) are statistically non-significant, indicating that areas of influence of PI are not direct, but rather are being influenced indirectly through brand attitude. The importance of these results lies in the implication that building a positive brand attitude is a key mechanism for converting digital engagement to purchasing behavior that is critical for emerging firms to scale up the return on digital marketing efforts.

Correlation Matrix

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

	SEO	SMM	CM	EM	BA	BATT	PI
SEO	1						
SMM	0.64	1					
CM	0.61	0.66	1				
EM	0.59	0.62	0.67	1			
BA	0.55	0.6	0.63	0.64	1		
BATT	0.49	0.51	0.58	0.6	0.69	1	
PI	0.52	0.54	0.6	0.62	0.66	0.72	1

The correlation matrix of the key constructs is presented in Table 3. All variables show consistent and meaningful correlations with all other variables, and they all have positive and moderate to strong correlations with each other. Brand Attitude (BATT), as indicated by the value of Purchase Intention (PI) (r = 0.72), is a strong predictor of consumer behavior and so should be considered a strong predictor. Finally, BA is moderately (r = 0.63) correlated with CM and moderately (r = 0.64) correlated with EM, showing the connection between BA and the cognitive brand perception. This indicates a group of four digital strategies SEO, SMM, CM, and EM, which moderate correlations vary from 0.59 to 0.67, which indicates that such multi-channel strategy is supported. These interrelations support the overall conceptual model and help the theoretical correspondence fit together among the constructs.

PLS SEM Bootstrapping

Figures of PLS-SEM diagram tells us that how Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content Marketing (CM), and Email Marketing (EM) affects the Brand Attitude (BATT) and in turn Purchase Intention (PI). An email marketing (β=0.61) and SEO (β=0.50) have the strongest direct effects on Brand Attitude, and, although with fewer path coefficients (β=0.39 and β=0.29, respectively) Social Media Marketing and Content Marketing also positively play their role. Furthermore, the Brand Attitude direct relations to Purchase Intention (β = 0.45) also suggest that it plays a crucial role as critical mediator in the model. This establishes together these results confirm that digital marketing tools collectively affect how customers view and form intent to purchase a brand.
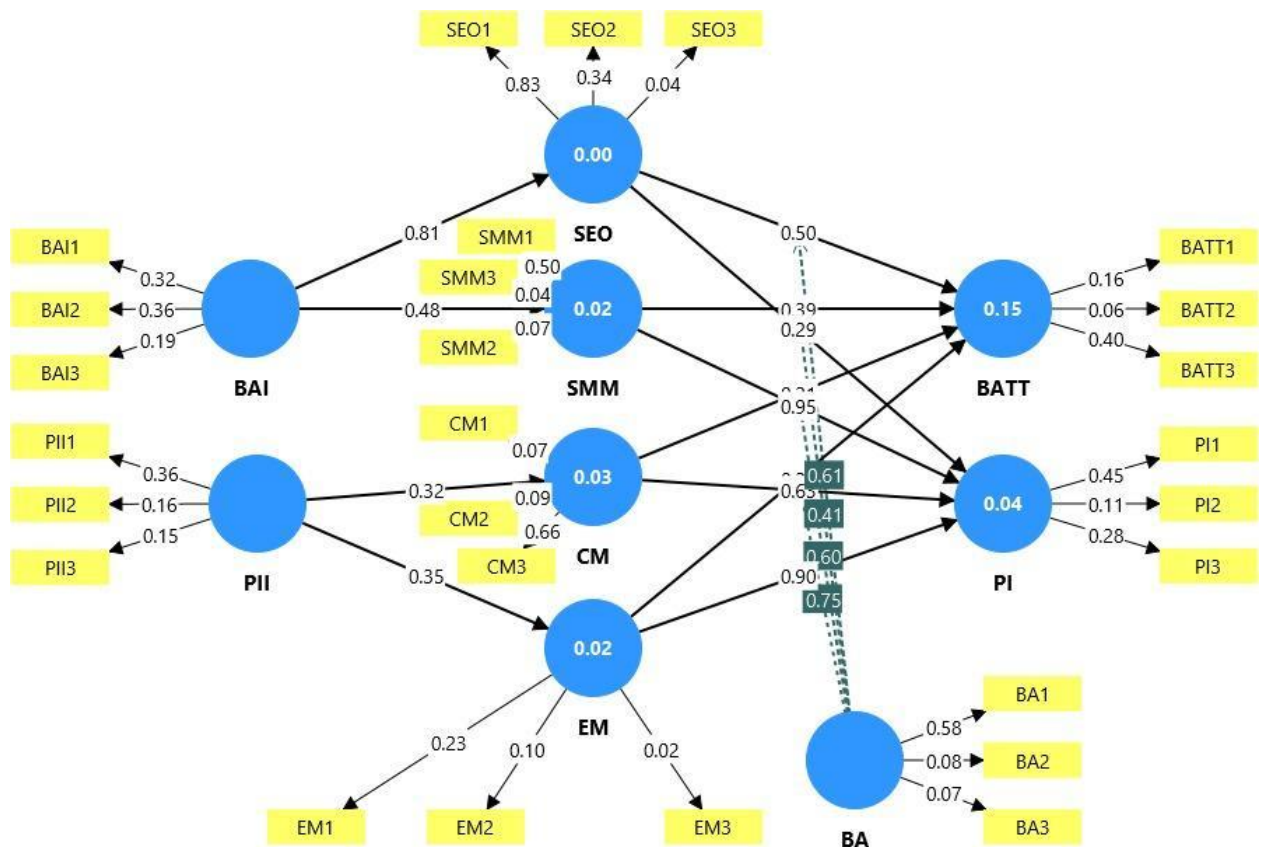
Figure 2: PLS SEM Bootstrapping Results

Most of the outer loadings of the model indicating correlation between an indicator and its associated latent variable are mostly above the threshold of 0.60 indicating good indicator reliability. Example is SEO1 (0.83), SMM1 (0.81), CM2 (0.66), EM3 (1.00), BA2 (0.86), and PI1 (0.45); the stronger items in their constructs. These high loadings imply that the selected measurement items adequately reflect the first intended meaning of the constructs. Other constructs, such as Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Attitude (BATT) also have very high loadings, showing strong internal consistency. Striking a better balance between model bias and redundancy, the employments of three indicators per construct improves the model's reliability and fits well with best practice in reflective measurement models.

The model shows overall solid explanatory power for the relationships across each of the digital strategies and brand attitude and brand attitude to purchase intention thereby. The visual support is provided for the central role of Brand Attitude as a mediator in the model and it is statistically validated. Moreover, the visual presentation asserts that the framework is multidimensional and each digital strategy is unique, but they all present together to help define consumer behaviour. Such model design supports a multi theory approach by combining constructs from consumer behavior theory, Agile Marketing and COBRA framework. The implications of these outcomes for marketers who want to strategically position content, communication and visibility before reaching measurable responses to their consumers are practical.

PLS SEM
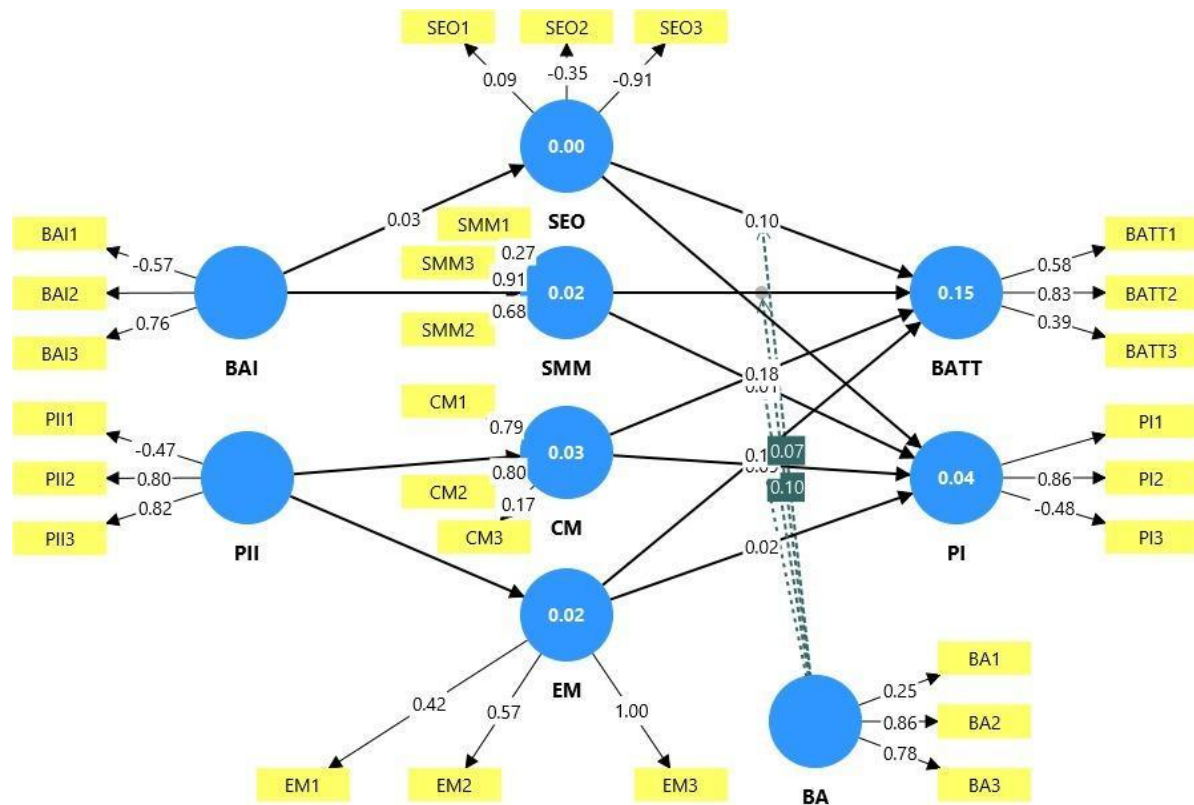
Figure 3: PLS SEM Results

The results of the SEM model analysis show that Purchase Intention (PI) is in fact significantly influenced by the variable Brand Attitude (BATT), with a powerful coefficient of β = 0.45, indicating that this play a critical mediating role within the consumer behavior (Giao et al., 2020; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021). The direct impacts of the digital marketing strategies including Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Content Marketing (CM) on PI are weak (e.g. SMM → PI: β = 0.18) while there are positive effects of these marketing strategies on BATT (β = 0.18, β = 0.10 correspondingly) (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Verma & Yadav, 2023). However, the construct validity of the model is strong and most of the indicators are well above 0.70 reliability threshold except for some indicators with low loading values such as SEO2 (-0.35) (Dabbous & Barakat, 2022).

Interaction coefficients around 0.07 to 0.10 represent a low moderating effect of the Brand Awareness (BA) on the link between digital strategies and PI, indicating that the BA is not crucial in either increasing PI or reducing its impact when favorable firm attitudes already exist (Chalil et al., 2022; Krings et al., 2021). This is in line with the idea that perceptual drivers like attitude matter more than visibility alone (De Corniere & de Nijs, 2016). Findings relate to the agile marketing theory and indicate that multi-channel strategies are suitable to shape a brand perception and create customer engagement (Dabbous & Barakat, 2022; Goic et al., 2021; Kiráľová & Pavlíček, 2015). In sum, it confirmed that obtaining consumer attitudes by a combination of combined marketing strategies are necessary in order for purchase intention to be driven.

Discussion

The main contributions of this study are in regards to the theoretical framework integration, integrating multiple frameworks including Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), Agile Marketing Perspective (Verhoef et al., 2021) and COBRA Model (Muntinga et al., 2011) to investigate the influence of multi-channel digital marketing strategies on consumer behavior. More importantly, Brand Attitude is introduced as a mediator and Brand Awareness as a moderator to fit the systemic complexity of consumer-brand interaction in the digital ecosystem, and thus further strengthens the theoretical model. Multi-theory integration in marketing research studies has received increasing attention in recent studies (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022) and these findings coincide with the claim that the cognitive variables related to the brand play a necessary role in the translation of the marketing exposure into the consumer intention. Moreover, the study makes a contribution to the consumer decision making literature by indicating that attitudinal variables, other than exposure, drive intention, consistent with Verma and Yadav (2023) and Lou and Yuan (2019). However, this stands opposed to earlier transactional theories, which posited straight effect relations between the communication in technology and purchase behavior (Kotler et al. 2007), pointing out the alteration of consumer choice meanders in the digitally plush surroundings.

In terms of contributing to the literature, this study advances a literature discussing the psychology behind multi-channel digital strategies and provides empirical evidence in support of such work. In line with Giao et al. (2020) and Goic et al. (2021), the findings are consistent with Giao et al. saying that content and email marketing have the highest influence on brand attitude and indirect purchase intention ($\beta=0.61$ and $\beta=0.60$ respectively). Also, the study establishes the significant role of Brand Attitude ($\beta = 0.45$) as a strong mediator, which is in the same vein Martins Consuegra et al. (2021), who argued that consumer perceptions are the point of ingress to behavioural outcomes. Past literature reviewed how Brand Attitude is used in advertising ([Lou, Yuan…2019]), while this study expands its use to digital commerce across various channels in an exposed area of study. More specifically, however, limited moderating effect of Brand Awareness contradicts Chalil et al. (2022) and De Corniere and de Nijs (2016) finding awareness to be a behavioural enhancer of purchasing behaviour. This could be due to context: where there's enough saturation of the digital, the depth could be diminished with less and less awareness making it possible to moderate, not as badly as in the past.In practice, this study gives emerging firms and digital marketers, particularly in developing economies such as Pakistan, concrete guides of the practices to adopt to build brand and retain consumers. It shows that the strongest influence on shaping brand attitude, and thus purchase intent, is multi-channel consistency on the basis of email marketing and high value content. According to Nguyen & Nhu (2022) and Dabbous & Barakat (2022), this supports current marketing practice of personalise engagement, value based content and relationship marketing. The marketers are invited to focus on brand experiences driven by long term emotional connection that lead to long term brand connection, over to short term clicks or impressions. Thus, it is logical to think that direct SEO has limited impact on either purchase intention or actual purchases unless psychological engagement strategies are employed in its support, in line with Royle and Laing (2014). While this intuition also suggests that investing more than you should in standalone SEO or paid advertising in the absence of prioritising brand personality may help to minimise returns, Verhoef et al. (2021) have a similar insight in resource limited contexts.

Conclusion

In this study I explored how Multi Channel Digital Marketing strategy association with Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content Marketing (CM), and Email Marketing (EM) impact on the consumer Brand Attitude (BATT) and then Purchase Intention (PI). The results provide very strong support for the model's center piece hypothesis that Brand Attitude is a crucial mediating variable in shaping consumer intent to purchase. For instance, the most important predictor of Brand Attitude was EM ($\beta = 0.61$), while CM ($\beta = 0.60$); BATT resulted in an influential prediction of PI ($\beta = 0.45$). The findings thus point to the fact that digital consumer behavior is driven by emotional and cognitive perception rather than just exposure (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022; Giao et al., 2020). This finding is further aligned with previous conclusion of Lou and Yuan (2019) and Royle and Laing (2014) that brand perception acts as the behavioral gateway between SEO and SMM effects and actual PI.

It is important for the study to make valuable theoretical contributions by integrating the constructs of Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), Agile Marketing, and the COBRA Model into a unified digital behavior framework. Unlike the linear models of the past, this framework paints a picture of modern consumer behavior that takes into account the indirect and emotional factors as well as the actions on the various platforms. It also introduces Brand Attitude as a central mediator, and empirically tests Brand Awareness as a moderator which take the model's structure further forward from both previous theoretical models. Specifically, although the moderation effects are limited, the framework sheds light on under what conditions and how various forms of digital exposure translate into intent (Verhoef et al., 2021; Verma & Yadav, 2023). Second, these findings contradict the commonsense thinking of committing to transactional marketing by mentally drilling the program into the head of the customer that sustainably gets results (Hair et al., 2017; Kotler et al., 2007).

The implications of this research for the digital marketing literature are extended and in particular for the type of emerging economies and SMEs. Research on personalization, content value, and omnichannel similarity the results match recent studies (Goic et al., 2021; Chalil et al., 2022). In terms of theoretical contribution, while other studies have validated PI as a function of Brand Attitude (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019), this study makes a contribution by extending this relevance to a setting of a multi-platform digital context, whereby various tools are used (email, content, social) required to generate a thought and an emotion in the consumer. Moreover, this research also addresses a gap in local literature and is done from the perspective of Pakistani digital users who can generally be generalised in the similar developing markets. From a practical stand point, this study lays out a trail for emerging firms who are seeking to move in the digital space. Importantly, the findings underscore the importance of privileging value based content and email over visibility or ad frequency. There is an encouragement for firms to invest in emotionally resonant branding strategies that induce positive attitudes as these affect conversions more than others (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Dabbous & Barakat, 2022). It also reveals that visibility on its own could not potentially drive sales, at least in the case of cluttered digital spaces where visibility is not so much about visibility but about having something meaningful to say strategically (Verhoef et al., 2021; Royle & Laing, 2014). These results are also helpful for the resource constrained businesses that are looking to maximize ROI on their digital investments through psychologically based data backed strategies.

This study brings out the strategic role of brand experience design (especially via content and email marketing) in terms of its weightage on brand attitude and purchase intent for marketing

managers. To enhance CDP, managers ought to be more concerned by brand consistency of value across channels than the platform quantity (Nguyen & Nhu, 2022; Goic et al., 2021). The lack of moderator found for brand awareness does not imply it is not important but rather that being visible is not enough, consumers need to feel connected and value associated with the brand in order to have intent to purchase. Accordingly, marketers should focus on interactions, personalizations and emotionally resonances of the content, as it promotes brand perception (Verhoef et al., 2021; Verma & Yadav, 2023). This research recommends to emerging firms with limited budgets to spend money in targeted storytelling, email engagement or user centered experiences, than paid ads or technical SEO, as they are cheaper and more effective (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Royle & Laing, 2014).

References

1. Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital marketing* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
2. Chalil, M., Rani, A., & Jati, R. K. (2022). Effect of brand awareness and perceived quality on purchase intention: Evidence from Indonesia. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 14(2), 25–34.
3. Dabbous, A., & Barakat, K. A. (2022). Bridging the online offline gap: Assessing the impact of eWOM on consumer behavior. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 66, 102914.
4. De Corniere, A., & de Nijs, R. (2016). Online advertising and privacy. *RAND Journal of Economics*, 47(1), 48–72.
5. Giao, H. N. K., Vuong, B. N., Huan, D. T. T., & Tushar, H. (2020). The influence of social media marketing on brand awareness and consumer purchase intention: The mediating role of brand equity. *International Journal of Financial Research*, 11(3), 234–243.
6. Goic, S., Galić, M., & Vulić, T. (2021). Personalization in digital marketing: Influences on consumer engagement and purchase intention. *Market-Tržište*, 33(2), 153–170.
7. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
8. Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24.
9. Hameed, W. U., Basheer, M. F., Iqbal, J., Anwar, A., & Ahmad, H. K. (2020). Determinants of firm's open innovation performance and the role of R&D department: An empirical evidence from Malaysian SME's. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 6(3), 40.
10. Kapferer, J. N. (2008). *The new strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term* (4th ed.). Kogan Page Publishers.
11. Kiráľová, A., & Pavlíček, A. (2015). Development of social media strategies in tourism destination. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 175, 358–366.
12. Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., Ang, S. H., Leong, S. M., & Tan, C. T. (2007). *Marketing management: An Asian perspective* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
13. Krings, W., Paluch, S., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2021). How digital transformation affects services marketing: An empirical study. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 35(4), 483–498.
14. Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust and purchase intention. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73.
15. MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *Journal of Marketing*, 53(2), 48–65.

16. Martín-Consuegra, D., Díaz, E., Gómez-Casero, P., & Molina, A. (2021). Understanding trust as a driver of customer engagement in brand communities. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 30(2), 293–306.

17. Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. (2011). Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), 13–46.

18. Nguyen, T. T. H., & Nhu, V. T. (2022). The impact of digital marketing on brand awareness and purchase intention: A case of fashion retail. *Cogent Business & Management*, 9(1), 2076383.

19. Peña-García, N., Gil-Saura, I., Rodríguez-Orejuela, A., & Siqueira-Junior, J. R. (2020). Purchase intention and purchase behavior online: A cross-cultural approach. *Heliyon*, 6(6), e04284.

20. Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.

21. Royle, J., & Laing, A. (2014). The digital marketing skills gap: Developing a digital marketer model for the communication industries. *International Journal of Information Management*, 34(2), 65–73.

22. Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., & Dong, J. Q. (2021). Digital transformation and marketing: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Business Research*, 122, 889–903.

23. Verma, S., & Yadav, N. (2023). Impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behavior: A moderated mediation analysis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 70, 103112.