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Examining the Relationship between Digital Marketing and Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Electronic Gadgets Using PLS-SEM

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and online communication platforms has significantly transformed consumer buying behaviour in electronic gadget markets. The present study examines the influence of digital marketing dimensions on consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of consumer trust. The study specifically investigates the effects of Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on Consumer Trust (CT) and Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB). A quantitative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 475 respondents belonging to Eastern Uttar Pradesh through a structured questionnaire. The study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4 to examine the proposed relationships among the constructs. Reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and structural model assessment were conducted to validate the proposed framework. The findings revealed that Social Media Marketing, Digital Content Marketing, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth significantly and positively influence Consumer Trust. Among the predictors, Social Media Marketing emerged as the strongest determinant of consumer trust. The results further confirmed that Consumer Trust significantly influences Consumer Buying Behaviour toward electronic gadgets and mediates the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour. The study contributes to the growing literature on digital marketing and online consumer behaviour by providing empirical evidence from the Indian electronic gadgets market. The findings offer important implications for digital marketers, e-commerce firms, and electronic gadget companies seeking to strengthen consumer trust and improve online purchasing engagement in competitive digital environments.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Consumer Trust, Electronic Gadgets, PLS-SEM
JEL Classifications: M31, M37, D12, L86, O33

1. INTRODUCTION

The expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the structure of contemporary marketing and consumer interaction across global markets. Rapid internet penetration, smartphone accessibility, social networking platforms, and e-commerce ecosystems have reshaped the manner in which consumers search for information, compare alternatives, and purchase products (Boustani et al., 2022; Popescu et al., 2025). The transition from traditional communication channels toward digitally driven engagement has significantly influenced consumer decision-making processes, particularly in technology-intensive product categories such as electronic gadgets. Consumers increasingly rely on online sources for product reviews, specifications, demonstrations, ratings, and peer recommendations before making purchase decisions (Khan et al., 2026). This transformation has elevated digital marketing from a promotional tool to a strategic

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mechanism influencing consumer perception, engagement, trust, and buying behaviour.

Electronic gadgets such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, gaming accessories, wireless devices, and smart home technologies have become indispensable elements of modern lifestyles. The growing dependence on digital technologies for communication, education, work, entertainment, and commerce has accelerated consumer demand for innovative electronic products. Unlike low-involvement consumer goods, electronic gadgets involve higher levels of consumer evaluation because buyers consider factors such as technological features, product reliability, price, utility, brand image, durability, and post-purchase support before purchasing (Rangaswamy et al., 2021). Consequently, consumers actively engage with digital platforms to reduce uncertainty and obtain comprehensive information regarding electronic products. Digital marketing has emerged as one of the most influential forces shaping modern consumer behaviour. Contemporary digital marketing practices include social media marketing, influencer collaborations, content marketing, live-streaming promotions, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), search engine marketing, personalized advertising, online reviews, and interactive customer engagement (Hidayat et al., 2024; Nyagadza et al., 2023). These approaches enable firms to maintain continuous communication with consumers while simultaneously creating personalized experiences that influence purchase intentions and buying decisions. Businesses operating in highly competitive electronic markets increasingly allocate substantial resources toward digital campaigns in order to strengthen brand visibility and consumer loyalty. The evolution of social media platforms has further intensified the relationship between digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X, and short-video applications have become important sources of product information and brand communication. Consumers are regularly exposed to gadget reviews, technology demonstrations, influencer recommendations, comparison videos, and user-generated experiences through these platforms. Such digital interactions significantly shape consumer attitudes toward electronic products by influencing perceived usefulness, trustworthiness, and product value (Bajpai and Mishra, n.d.). Research has indicated that consumers demonstrate stronger purchase intentions when digital content appears authentic, informative, visually engaging, and socially relevant.

The increasing importance of influencer marketing and social media engagement has altered the traditional flow of marketing communication. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of promotional messages; rather, they actively participate in information creation, sharing, and evaluation. Electronic word-of-mouth has become particularly influential because consumers tend to trust peer opinions and online reviews more than conventional advertising claims. Online product ratings, customer testimonials, unboxing videos, and community discussions significantly affect the purchase behaviour of consumers interested in electronic gadgets. Positive eWOM strengthens brand credibility and reduces perceived purchase risk, while negative online experiences can discourage consumers from purchasing particular products (Nyagadza et al., 2023). Digital content marketing also contributes substantially to shaping consumer buying behaviour in electronic markets. Informative and entertaining content enables consumers to understand technical features, compare alternatives, and evaluate product suitability before purchase. Studies examining digital content marketing have demonstrated that content informativeness, entertainment value, social interaction, and self-expression positively influence consumer buying interest through electronic word-of-mouth mechanisms (Hidayat et al., 2024). Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets often seek experiential and functional information that can simplify complex technological evaluations. Consequently, content-driven digital marketing strategies have become highly relevant for firms operating in electronics industries.

The expansion of e-commerce platforms has further accelerated the role of digital marketing in influencing electronic gadget purchases. Online marketplaces provide consumers with convenience, product variety, price comparisons, flexible payment systems, and accessibility across geographic regions. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated digital shopping adoption worldwide and permanently transformed online purchasing behaviour. Researchers observed that consumers increasingly shifted toward digital purchasing channels for electronics and technology products because online shopping reduced physical limitations while offering convenience and safety (Eaganathan et al., 2022; Popescu et al., 2025). Importantly, these behavioural changes continued even after restrictions were removed, indicating long-term structural transformation in consumer buying patterns. Consumer buying behaviour in online environments is influenced by multiple psychological, social, and technological factors. Digital platforms integrate emotional appeals, scarcity cues, personalized advertisements, recommendation systems, and immersive experiences that affect consumer decision-making processes. Neuromarketing-based studies have highlighted that online reviews, visual presentation, social proof, brand perception, and product presentation significantly influence online purchase intentions among digital consumers (Varghese and Uthira, 2026). Electronic gadget consumers frequently associate advanced technology products with innovation, social identity, status enhancement, and personal convenience, making digital marketing communication particularly influential within this product category.

The significance of digital marketing has become increasingly visible within emerging economies such as India. Rapid smartphone adoption, affordable internet services, digital payment systems, and the growth of e-commerce platforms have transformed consumer interaction patterns across urban, semi-urban, and rural regions. Consumers in India now extensively use digital channels for gathering information related to electronic products and services. In states such as Uttar Pradesh, social media platforms and online marketing activities have become important determinants influencing purchase decisions among digitally active consumers. Existing research conducted in Uttar Pradesh reported that informativeness, trust, emotional engagement, convenience, and perceived value significantly affect purchase decisions through social media interactions (Ahmad et al., 2026).

The electronic goods industry has experienced substantial changes due to digital marketing adoption. Firms increasingly utilize online communication tools to improve customer engagement, service quality, brand positioning, and customer retention. Studies examining digital marketing performance within electronic goods industries revealed that website design, product quality information, trust, security, and customer satisfaction positively contribute toward customer loyalty and purchase intention (Rangaswamy et al., 2021). Consumers purchasing electronics often prefer online information sources because digital platforms enable them to evaluate products more effectively before making high-involvement purchase decisions. Consumer behaviour research during pandemic and post-pandemic periods further emphasized the growing dominance of online purchasing channels. Online shopping behaviour has expanded due to technological accessibility, convenience, flexible delivery systems, and enhanced digital trust. Research examining online shopping attitudes found that social value, platform quality, information quality, and system quality significantly influence online consumer attitudes and buying behaviour (Boustani et al., 2022). Consumers purchasing electronics increasingly prefer platforms that provide secure payment systems, detailed product information, reliable reviews, and efficient customer support.

Recent developments in live-streaming commerce and interactive shopping environments have introduced new dimensions to digital marketing strategies. Live-stream shopping integrates entertainment, real-time interaction, and instant purchasing capabilities within digital platforms. Research examining live-streaming impulse buying behaviour highlighted that atmospheric cues, hedonic value, utilitarian value, and cultural factors significantly influence digital purchase behaviour across different consumer groups (Wang et al., 2026). Such interactive digital environments strengthen emotional engagement and increase impulsive buying tendencies, particularly among technologically engaged consumers.

Despite extensive literature on digital marketing and online consumer behaviour, limited empirical studies have specifically examined the relationship between digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets using advanced structural modelling approaches in the Indian context. Existing studies have generally focused on general online shopping, social media engagement, influencer marketing, or e-commerce adoption without comprehensively investigating the integrated relationships among digital marketing dimensions, consumer trust, engagement, electronic word-of-mouth, and gadget purchase behaviour. Moreover, electronic gadgets represent a unique product category characterized by rapid technological change, high consumer involvement, and information-intensive decision-making processes. To address such analytical complexity, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) has emerged as an effective statistical approach for examining relationships among latent variables in marketing and behavioural research. PLS-SEM enables simultaneous assessment of measurement reliability, construct validity, and structural relationships while accommodating predictive and exploratory research models (Hidayat et al., 2024; Nyagadza et al., 2023). Its application has expanded considerably in studies related to digital marketing, e-commerce behaviour, online trust, technology adoption, and purchase intention. Considering the rapid growth of digital commerce, increasing dependence on online communication platforms, and rising demand for electronic gadgets, understanding how digital marketing influences consumer buying behaviour has become essential for both researchers and practitioners. Firms operating in electronic gadget markets require deeper insights regarding the influence of digital marketing activities on consumer perceptions, trust formation, engagement, and purchase behaviour. Such understanding may support the development of effective digital strategies capable of improving customer satisfaction, enhancing competitive advantage, and strengthening long-term consumer relationships.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets using PLS-SEM. The study seeks to contribute empirical evidence regarding the role of digital marketing dimensions in shaping gadget purchase behaviour while enriching the growing literature on digital consumer behaviour within the Indian context.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Social Media Marketing and Consumer Trust

Social media marketing has become one of the most influential dimensions of digital marketing in shaping consumer perceptions and trust in online environments. The rapid growth of platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and X has enabled firms to establish direct interaction with consumers through product promotions, influencer collaborations, live demonstrations, and customer engagement activities. Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets frequently depend on social media platforms to obtain information regarding product specifications, functionality, reviews, and user experiences before making purchase decisions.

Research conducted on social media influencer marketing highlighted that consumers demonstrate stronger trust toward brands when promotional content appears authentic, informative, and experience-oriented (Bajpai and Mishra, n.d.). Influencers and digital creators significantly affect consumer perception because their recommendations are often viewed as more reliable than conventional advertising messages. Consumers exposed to relatable and transparent promotional content tend to develop favorable attitudes and stronger trust toward products and brands. Similarly, studies conducted among consumers in Uttar Pradesh reported that informativeness, emotional appeal, convenience, and credibility available through social media platforms positively influence consumer purchase-related perceptions (Ahmad et al., 2026). Social media platforms now function as important sources of information exchange and digital interaction, especially among technologically active consumers.

Research on live-streaming commerce also observed that interactive communication and social engagement increase consumer confidence and digital trust in online shopping environments (Wang et al., 2026). Consumers interacting with

brands through real-time communication channels often develop stronger emotional attachment and confidence toward products.

In the context of electronic gadgets, consumers generally evaluate multiple alternatives and seek credible information before making purchase decisions. Therefore, social media marketing significantly contributes toward trust formation by reducing information asymmetry and enhancing digital engagement.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

2.1.1. Hypothesis H_1

- H_1: Social media marketing has a significant positive influence on consumer trust toward electronic gadgets.

2.2. Digital Content Marketing and Consumer Trust

Digital content marketing refers to the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant, and engaging content intended to attract and influence target consumers. In electronic gadget markets, digital content marketing includes product comparison videos, tutorials, reviews, feature demonstrations, blogs, interactive posts, and informative promotional materials. Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets often require detailed product knowledge because technology-related products involve higher perceived risk and financial involvement.

Studies examining digital content marketing found that content informativeness, entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression significantly influence consumer buying interest and engagement (Hidayat et al., 2024). Informative and interactive content reduces uncertainty regarding product performance and enhances consumers' confidence in digital platforms and brands. The study further reported that consumers receiving high-quality digital content through online platforms develop stronger trust because such content improves understanding of product functionality and usability. In digital shopping environments, consumers often evaluate electronic gadgets through online demonstrations, reviews, and technical comparisons before finalizing purchases. As a result, content quality becomes an important determinant of consumer trust. Research examining online consumer behaviour during post-pandemic periods also observed that consumers increasingly prefer digital platforms providing personalized and information-rich experiences (Popescu et al., 2025). Digital content marketing therefore contributes toward strengthening consumer trust by improving transparency, accessibility, and information quality within online environments.

In electronic gadget purchasing, where consumers frequently seek technical clarification and authentic product information, effective digital content marketing enhances trust formation and positively influences consumer evaluation processes.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

2.2.2. Hypothesis H_2

- H_2: Digital content marketing has a significant positive influence on consumer trust toward electronic gadgets.

2.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Consumer Trust

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) represents consumer-generated reviews, comments, ratings, recommendations, and opinions shared through online platforms and social networking sites. eWOM has emerged as one of the most influential information sources in online consumer environments because consumers often trust peer experiences more than firm-generated promotional messages.

Research examining the influence of social media eWOM found that information quality, source credibility, usefulness, and information adoption significantly influence consumer purchase intention and digital trust (Nyagadza et al., 2023). Consumers tend to rely on online reviews and shared experiences because such information reflects actual consumer usage and satisfaction levels. Similarly, studies examining online shopping behaviour during pandemic periods observed that reliable online information, social value, and information quality significantly influence consumer attitudes toward online purchasing platforms (Boustani et al., 2022). Positive reviews and recommendations reduce uncertainty and perceived risk associated with online shopping activities. Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets frequently evaluate online reviews, ratings, unboxing experiences, and expert recommendations before making final purchase decisions because electronic products involve greater financial investment and technological evaluation. Positive eWOM therefore strengthens consumer confidence and trust toward products, sellers, and digital platforms.

The increasing role of online communities and review-based decision-making has made eWOM an important determinant of consumer trust within digital marketing environments.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

2.2.3. Hypothesis H_3

- H_3: Electronic word-of-mouth has a significant positive influence on consumer trust toward electronic gadgets.

2.4. Consumer Trust and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer trust is considered one of the most critical determinants influencing online buying behaviour. In digital purchasing environments, consumers cannot physically examine products before purchasing; therefore, trust toward online platforms, digital information, sellers, and brands becomes essential in reducing perceived risk and uncertainty.

Studies examining digital marketing performance in the electronic goods industry reported that trust and security positively influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase behaviour (Rangaswamy et al., 2021). Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets generally prefer trusted online platforms that provide secure payment systems, authentic product descriptions, transparent return policies, and reliable customer support services. Research on digital content marketing also found that positive digital interaction and information quality strengthen consumer confidence toward online purchasing environments (Hidayat et al., 2024). Consumers are more likely to engage in online purchasing

activities when they perceive digital communication and platform information as trustworthy and reliable. Further evidence from online shopping studies revealed that system quality, information quality, and service quality collectively contribute toward consumer trust and online buying attitudes (Boustani et al., 2022). Trust significantly influences purchase-related behaviour because consumers seek assurance regarding product quality, transaction safety, and post-purchase services before purchasing electronic products online.

In electronic gadget markets, where consumers frequently encounter technological complexity and financial risk, trust plays an important mediating role between digital marketing activities and consumer buying behaviour.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

2.2.4. Hypothesis H_4

- H_4: Consumer trust has a significant positive influence on consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

The present study proposes a conceptual framework to examine the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets. The framework is grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) theory and Trust Transfer Theory. According to the S-O-R framework, external marketing stimuli influence consumers' internal psychological states, which subsequently affect behavioural responses.

In the proposed model, Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) are considered external digital marketing stimuli that influence Consumer Trust (CT). Consumer trust acts as a mediating mechanism between digital marketing activities and Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) toward electronic gadgets.

The framework assumes that consumers exposed to informative social media communication, engaging digital content, and positive electronic word-of-mouth are more likely to develop trust toward online platforms, brands, and electronic products. Increased consumer trust subsequently strengthens purchase-related behaviour, including product evaluation, purchase intention, and actual buying decisions. The framework (Figure 1) is theoretically balanced and suitable for empirical examination using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) (Baron et.al. 1986). The model enables the examination of both direct and indirect relationships among constructs and is appropriate for predictive consumer behaviour research in digital marketing contexts.

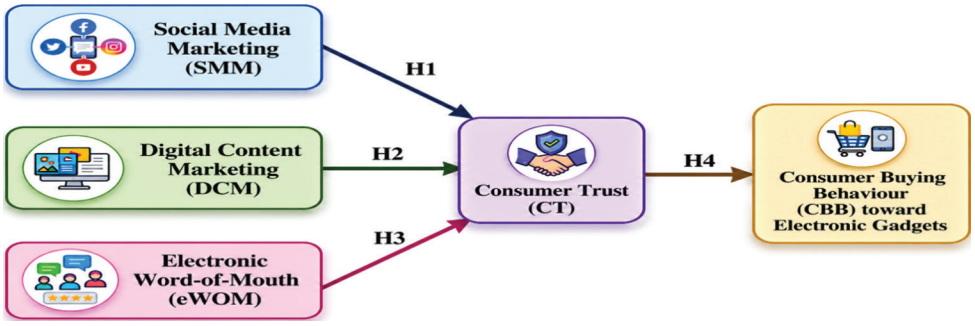
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets in the Eastern Uttar Pradesh region. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aims to empirically examine causal relationships among latent variables through statistical modeling techniques. The study specifically employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses. PLS-SEM has gained considerable acceptance in contemporary marketing and consumer behaviour research due to its suitability for prediction-oriented studies, complex models, mediation analysis, and non-normal datasets (Hair et al., 2021). The method is particularly appropriate when the objective is to maximize explained variance and examine interrelationships among latent constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2021). In digital marketing research, PLS-SEM is widely utilized because consumer perceptions, attitudes, trust, and behavioural intentions are generally measured as reflective latent variables requiring multivariate analysis techniques. The present research follows a cross-sectional research design in which data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. The study investigates how Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) influence Consumer Trust (CT), which subsequently affects Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) toward electronic gadgets.

The proposed framework is theoretically grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) theory. According to the S-O-R framework, external environmental stimuli influence consumers' internal psychological states, which subsequently shape behavioural responses (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In the present study, digital marketing dimensions represent external stimuli, consumer trust represents the organismic state, and consumer buying behaviour represents the behavioural response.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Recent studies applying PLS-SEM in behavioural and marketing research also support the suitability of the method for examining mediation mechanisms and predictive consumer behaviour models (Hair et al., 2019; Fatima et al., 2026).

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population of the study comprised consumers residing in Eastern Uttar Pradesh who have experience purchasing or exploring electronic gadgets through digital platforms. The study focused on consumers using online platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, social media marketplaces, and official electronic brand websites.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted because the study required responses only from consumers who possessed prior exposure to digital marketing activities related to electronic gadgets. Respondents who had never interacted with digital marketing platforms or never purchased electronic gadgets through digitally influenced channels were excluded from the study. Data were collected from major districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, including Lucknow, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, and nearby urban and semi-urban regions. These locations were selected because internet penetration, smartphone usage, and e-commerce adoption have substantially increased in these regions during recent years.

The final sample size consisted of 475 respondents. The sample size was considered adequate based on the recommendations provided by Hair et al. (2021), who suggested that PLS-SEM requires sufficient observations to ensure statistical power and model stability. Previous PLS-SEM studies in digital consumer behaviour research have also used similar sample sizes for structural model estimation (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered both online and offline. Google Forms were used for online responses, while printed questionnaires were distributed among respondents visiting electronic markets, educational institutions, shopping centers, and gadget retail outlets. The data collection process was conducted between January 2026 and March 2026. Respondents were informed regarding the academic purpose of the study, and confidentiality of responses was assured before participation. Participation was entirely voluntary. A screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that only respondents familiar with digital platforms and electronic gadget purchasing behaviour participated in the survey.

3.3.1. Measurement scale

The questionnaire instrument was designed on the basis of previously validated constructs available in digital marketing and consumer behaviour literature. The measurement instrument consisted of two sections: demographic information and construct-related measurement items.

The study measured five latent constructs:

- Social media marketing (SMM)
- Digital content marketing (DCM)
- Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)
- Consumer trust (CT)
- Consumer buying behaviour (CBB).

Before conducting structural model analysis, the collected data were screened for missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies. No substantial missing values were observed in the dataset. The responses were coded and entered into Microsoft Excel before being imported into SmartPLS 4 software for analysis (Zhao et.al.2010).

Descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, and standard deviation were computed to understand respondent characteristics and response patterns. The demographic analysis included gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, frequency of gadget purchasing, and preferred purchasing platforms. Multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (Anderson et al.1988). All VIF values were found below the recommended threshold value of 5, indicating absence of multicollinearity issues among predictor constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Common Method Bias (CMB) was examined using Harman's single-factor test. The total variance explained by a single factor remained below the critical threshold, indicating that common method bias was not a serious concern in the study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.4. Reliability and Validity Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated through reliability and validity analysis before testing the structural relationships.

3.3.2. Reliability analysis

Internal consistency reliability was examined using:

- Cronbach's alpha
- Composite reliability (CR).

According to Hair et al. (2019), values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. All constructs in the present study were expected to satisfy the recommended reliability threshold.

3.3.3. Convergent validity

Convergent validity was assessed using:

- Factor Loadings
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Standardized factor loadings above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50 indicate satisfactory convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

3.3.4. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was examined through:

- Fornell–Larcker Criterion
- Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

HTMT values below 0.85 confirm adequate discriminant validity among latent constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

Similar reliability and validity procedures have been extensively applied in recent PLS-SEM studies examining sustainability, policy awareness, and behavioural relationships (Fatima et al., 2026).

3.5. Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

After validating the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed using SmartPLS 4 software. The structural model examined direct and mediating relationships among latent constructs.

The following relationships were tested:

- Social Media Marketing → Consumer Trust
- Digital Content Marketing → Consumer Trust
- Electronic Word-of-Mouth → Consumer Trust
- Consumer Trust → Consumer Buying Behaviour.

The mediating role of Consumer Trust was also examined between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour.

Bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples was performed to evaluate path significance, t-values, and p-values. Path coefficients (β), coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2) were examined to evaluate model strength and predictive capability (Kline, 2015).

According to Hair et al. (2021), bootstrapping procedures improve estimation accuracy and provide robust significance testing in PLS-SEM studies. The model fit was further assessed using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Values below 0.08 indicate acceptable model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 475 respondents included in the study. The findings indicate that male respondents constituted the majority of the sample (57.9%), while female respondents represented 40.0% of the respondents. Most respondents belonged to the 21-30 years age group (48.0%), indicating higher involvement of young consumers in online electronic gadget purchasing activities. Regarding educational qualification, postgraduate respondents formed the largest category (42.1%), followed by graduates (38.1%), reflecting higher educational exposure among digitally active consumers. Occupational analysis showed that service-class respondents (36.0%) and students (32.0%) were the dominant respondent groups. The income distribution revealed that most respondents belonged to the middle-income category of ₹20,001-₹40,000 (34.1%). In terms of online purchasing frequency, 30.1% of respondents sometimes purchased electronic gadgets online, while 26.9% purchased frequently, indicating increasing dependence on digital shopping platforms.

Amazon emerged as the most preferred purchasing platform (45.1%), followed by Flipkart (33.1%). Smartphones were identified as the most frequently purchased electronic gadgets (41.1%), followed by laptops (20.0%) and audio devices (14.1%). Overall, the demographic findings suggest that young, educated, and digitally active consumers dominate the online electronic gadgets market in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Figure 2 presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model generated through SmartPLS. The figure illustrates the relationships between latent constructs and their respective measurement indicators used in the study.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	275	57.9
	Female	190	40.0
	Other	10	2.1
Age group	Below 20 years	48	10.1
	21-30 years	228	48.0
	31-40 years	119	25.1
	41-50 years	57	12.0
	Above 50 years	23	4.8
Educational qualification	Intermediate	38	8.0
	Graduate	181	38.1
	Postgraduate	200	42.1
	Doctorate	38	8.0
	Other	18	3.8
Occupation	Student	152	32.0
	Service	171	36.0
	Business	76	16.0
	Professional	48	10.1
	Other	28	5.9
Monthly income	Below ₹20,000	86	18.1
	₹20,001-₹40,000	162	34.1
	₹40,001-₹60,000	124	26.1
	₹60,001-₹80,000	67	14.1
	Above ₹80,000	36	7.6
Frequency of purchasing electronic gadgets online	Very rarely	43	9.1
	Occasionally	95	20.0
	Sometimes	143	30.1
	Frequently	128	26.9
	Very frequently	66	13.9
Preferred purchasing platform	Amazon	214	45.1
	Flipkart	157	33.1
	Brand official website	48	10.1
	Offline store	38	8.0
	Other	18	3.7
Type of gadget frequently purchased	Smartphones	195	41.1
	Laptops	95	20.0
	Smartwatches	52	10.9
	Audio devices	67	14.1
	Gaming devices	33	6.9
	Accessories	33	6.9

Source: Author's computation from survey data (2026)

The results show that all factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability and satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) demonstrated significant positive effects on Consumer Trust (CT), with path coefficients of 0.413, 0.294, and 0.192 respectively.

Consumer Trust further showed a strong positive influence on Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) with a path coefficient of 0.679. The R^2 value of Consumer Trust was 0.576, indicating that the independent variables collectively explain 57.6% of the variance in consumer trust. Similarly, the R^2 value of Consumer Buying Behaviour was 0.460, showing moderate explanatory power of the model.

Table 2 presents the reliability and convergent validity assessment of the latent constructs used in the study. The measurement model

Figure 2: Confirmatory factor analysis

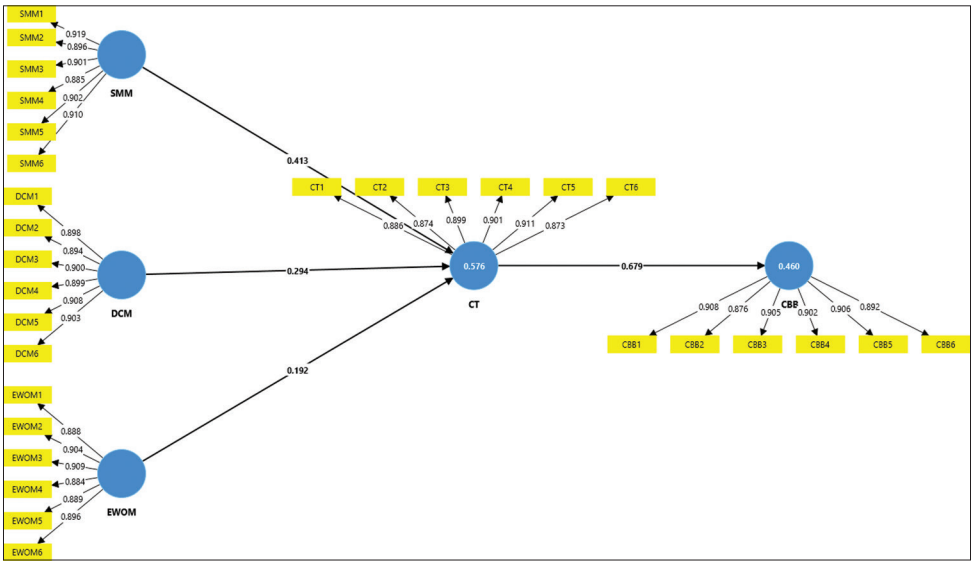


Table 2: Reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted
CBB	0.952	0.953	0.962	0.807
CT	0.948	0.949	0.958	0.794
DCM	0.953	0.954	0.963	0.811
EWOM	0.950	0.951	0.960	0.801
SMM	0.954	0.955	0.963	0.814

was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which are commonly recommended indicators in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2021). The findings indicate that all constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability because the Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.948 to 0.954, which are substantially higher than the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Among the constructs, Social Media Marketing (SMM) reported the highest Cronbach's Alpha value (0.954), followed by Digital Content Marketing (DCM) (0.953), Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) (0.952), Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) (0.950), and Consumer Trust (CT) (0.948). These results confirm that the measurement items consistently represent their respective constructs. Similarly, Composite Reliability values (rho_a and rho_c) for all constructs exceeded the recommended minimum value of 0.70, indicating satisfactory construct reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The composite reliability (rho_c) values ranged between 0.958 and 0.963, demonstrating high reliability and construct stability within the measurement model. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were also above the acceptable threshold value of 0.50 suggested by Hair et al. (2021). The AVE values ranged from 0.794 to 0.814, indicating strong convergent validity among the latent variables. These findings imply that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators.

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) analysis used to examine discriminant validity among the latent constructs.

Table 3: Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Variables	CBB	CT	DCM	EWOM	SMM
CBB					
CT	0.714				
DCM	0.424	0.664			
EWOM	0.414	0.599	0.576		
SMM	0.489	0.713	0.590	0.549	

HTMT is considered one of the most reliable approaches for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling (Henseler et al., 2015). The results indicate that all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold value of 0.85, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity among the constructs. The highest HTMT value was observed between Consumer Trust (CT) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) (0.713), followed by Consumer Trust (CT) and Digital Content Marketing (DCM) (0.664). The remaining values ranged from 0.414 to 0.599, which remained substantially below the critical threshold. These findings indicate that each construct is empirically distinct from other constructs included in the model. In other words, Social Media Marketing, Digital Content Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Buying Behaviour measure different conceptual phenomena without significant overlap. The satisfactory HTMT values confirm that the measurement model possesses adequate discriminant validity and is appropriate for further structural model evaluation in PLS-SEM analysis (Henseler et.al. 2016).

Table 4 presents the Fornell–Larcker Criterion used to evaluate discriminant validity among the latent constructs. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than its correlation values with other constructs in the model. The diagonal values in the table represent the square root of AVE for each construct, whereas the off-diagonal values represent inter-construct correlations. The results reveal that the square root of AVE values for Consumer Buying Behaviour (0.898), Consumer Trust (0.891), Digital Content Marketing (0.900), Electronic

Word-of-Mouth (0.895), and Social Media Marketing (0.902) are all higher than their corresponding inter-construct correlation values. For example, the square root of AVE for Consumer Trust (0.891) is greater than its correlations with Consumer Buying Behaviour (0.679), Digital Content Marketing (0.632), Electronic Word-of-Mouth (0.569), and Social Media Marketing (0.680). Similar patterns were observed for all remaining constructs. These findings confirm that each construct shares greater variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model, thereby establishing satisfactory discriminant validity. The results therefore support the adequacy and distinctiveness of the measurement model constructs used in the present study.

Table 5 presents the model fit indices of the proposed PLS-SEM model. Model fit assessment is important in evaluating how well the proposed conceptual framework explains the observed data (Hair et al., 2021). The study assessed model fit using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and Normed Fit Index (NFI). The SRMR values for both the saturated model (0.028) and estimated model (0.028) were below the recommended threshold value of 0.08, indicating satisfactory model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Lower SRMR values indicate smaller discrepancies between the observed and predicted correlation matrices. The d_ULS and d_G values were also found within acceptable ranges, suggesting minimal differences between empirical and model-implied covariance matrices. The Chi-square values for the saturated model (735.832) and estimated model (737.408) further supported overall model adequacy. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) values for both models exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.90, with values of 0.952 and 0.951 respectively. According to Hair et al. (2019), NFI values above 0.90 indicate strong model fitness in structural equation modeling.

Table 6 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) values of the endogenous constructs included in the structural model. The R^2 value represents the predictive power of the independent variables in explaining the variance of dependent constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

The results indicate that Consumer Trust (CT) achieved an R^2 value of 0.576 and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.573. This implies that Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) collectively explain 57.6% of the variance in Consumer Trust. According to Chin (1998), R^2 values above 0.50 indicate moderate to substantial explanatory power in behavioral research. Similarly, Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) reported an R^2 value of 0.460 and adjusted R^2 value of 0.459. The findings indicate that Consumer Trust explains 46.0% of the variance in Consumer Buying Behaviour toward electronic gadgets. These results demonstrate satisfactory predictive relevance of the proposed model. The findings therefore confirm that digital marketing dimensions significantly contribute toward trust formation, which subsequently influences consumer buying behaviour in online electronic gadget markets.

Table 7 presents the standardized factor loadings of all measurement items used in the study. Factor loading analysis is used to assess indicator reliability and convergent validity within the measurement model (Hair et al., 2021). The results indicate that all factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.70, demonstrating strong indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2019). The factor loadings for Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) ranged from 0.876 to 0.908, indicating strong consistency among the measurement items representing consumer buying

Table 4: Fornell–Larcker criterion

Variables	CBB	CT	DCM	EWOM	SMM
CBB	0.898				
CT	0.679	0.891			
DCM	0.405	0.632	0.900		
EWOM	0.394	0.569	0.549	0.895	
SMM	0.467	0.680	0.564	0.523	0.902

Table 5: Model fit

Model fit indicator	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.028	0.028
d_ULS	0.355	0.371
d_G	0.266	0.267
Chi-square	735.832	737.408
NFI	0.952	0.951

Table 6: R square

Endogenous construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
CBB	0.460	0.459
CT	0.576	0.573

Table 7: Factor loading

Variables	CBB	CT	DCM	EWOM	SMM
CBB1	0.908				
CBB2	0.876				
CBB3	0.905				
CBB4	0.902				
CBB5	0.906				
CBB6	0.892				
CT1		0.886			
CT2		0.874			
CT3		0.899			
CT4		0.901			
CT5		0.911			
CT6		0.873			
DCM1			0.898		
DCM2			0.894		
DCM3			0.900		
DCM4			0.899		
DCM5			0.908		
DCM6			0.903		
EWOM1				0.888	
EWOM2				0.904	
EWOM3				0.909	
EWOM4				0.884	
EWOM5				0.889	
EWOM6				0.896	
SMM1					0.919
SMM2					0.896
SMM3					0.901
SMM4					0.885
SMM5					0.902
SMM6					0.910

behaviour. Similarly, the factor loadings for Consumer Trust (CT) ranged between 0.873 and 0.911, while Digital Content Marketing (DCM) reported loadings between 0.894 and 0.908. The Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) construct demonstrated loadings ranging from 0.884 to 0.909, and Social Media Marketing (SMM) showed loadings between 0.885 and 0.919. The highest loading was observed for SMM1 (0.919), indicating that social media advertisements strongly represent the Social Media Marketing construct. Overall, the strong factor loading values confirm that all indicators adequately represent their respective latent constructs and possess satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 8 presents the effect size (f^2) values of the structural model relationships. The f^2 statistic measures the impact of an exogenous construct on an endogenous construct by evaluating changes in R^2 values when a predictor construct is removed from the model (Cohen, 1988).

The results indicate that Consumer Trust (CT) has a strong effect on Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) with an f^2 value of 0.853. According to Cohen (1988), effect size values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects respectively. Therefore, the findings indicate that Consumer Trust exerts a substantial influence on consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets. Among the predictors of Consumer Trust, Social Media Marketing (SMM) demonstrated the strongest effect size with an f^2 value of 0.249, indicating a moderate effect on Consumer Trust. Digital Content Marketing (DCM) reported an f^2 value of 0.121, representing a small-to-moderate effect, while Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) demonstrated a relatively smaller effect size of 0.055. These findings suggest that Social Media Marketing contributes more substantially toward trust formation compared to other digital marketing dimensions included in the study. f^2 results confirm the practical significance of the proposed structural relationships within the model.

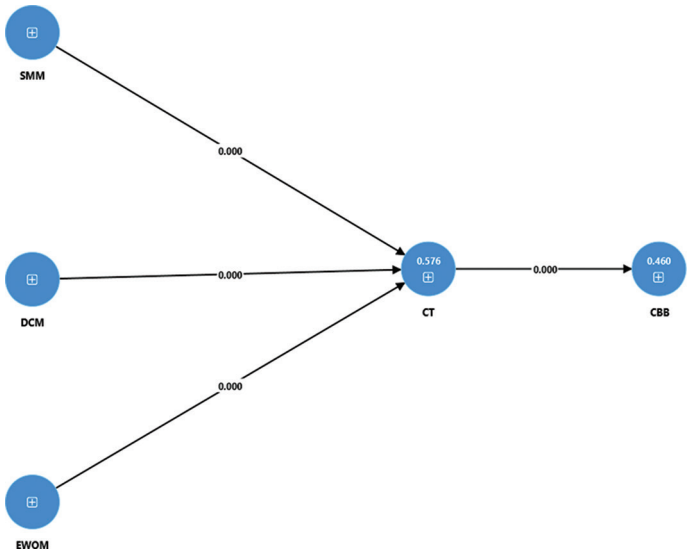
Figure 3 presents the Structural Equation Model (SEM) developed using SmartPLS to examine the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets. The model shows that Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) significantly influence Consumer Trust (CT), which subsequently affects Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB). The R^2 value of Consumer Trust (0.576) indicates that SMM, DCM, and EWOM collectively explain 57.6% of the variance in consumer trust. Similarly, the R^2 value of Consumer Buying Behaviour (0.460) shows that Consumer Trust explains 46.0% of the variance in consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

Table 9 presents the structural path coefficients of the proposed model obtained through bootstrapping analysis in PLS-SEM. The path coefficient analysis evaluates the strength, direction, and significance of relationships among latent constructs included in the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). The findings indicate that Consumer Trust (CT) has a significant positive influence on Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) with a path coefficient value of $\beta = 0.679$, $t = 25.955$, and $P < 0.001$. The high t-statistic and

Table 8: F square

Variables	CBB	CT	DCM	EWOM	SMM
CBB					
CT	0.853				
DCM		0.121			
EWOM		0.055			
SMM		0.249			

Figure 3: Stricture equation model



significant P-value confirm that increased consumer trust strongly enhances consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets. This result indicates that trust toward online platforms, digital communication, and electronic gadget sellers plays a substantial role in influencing purchasing decisions.

Among the antecedents of Consumer Trust, Social Media Marketing (SMM) demonstrated the strongest positive influence with $\beta = 0.413$, $t = 10.197$, and $P < 0.001$. The findings suggest that social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and interactive digital communication significantly strengthen consumer trust toward electronic gadgets.

Digital Content Marketing (DCM) also reported a significant positive relationship with Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.294$, $t = 7.035$, $P < 0.001$). The results indicate that informative and engaging digital content positively contributes toward trust formation among consumers purchasing electronic gadgets. Similarly, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) showed a statistically significant positive influence on Consumer Trust with $\beta = 0.192$, $t = 4.916$, and $P < 0.001$. Positive online reviews, recommendations, and consumer-generated content therefore enhance consumer confidence in online gadget purchasing environments. Since all p-values were below the recommended significance level of 0.05, all proposed hypotheses were accepted. The findings confirm that digital marketing dimensions significantly contribute toward consumer trust, which subsequently influences buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

Table 10 presents the total indirect effects of the independent variables on Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) through the mediating construct Consumer Trust (CT). The indirect effect

analysis was performed using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS to evaluate mediation relationships within the structural model (Nitzl et al., 2016).

The findings reveal that Digital Content Marketing (DCM) exerts a significant indirect influence on Consumer Buying Behaviour through Consumer Trust with $\beta = 0.199$, $t = 6.801$, and $P < 0.001$. This result indicates that informative and engaging digital content enhances consumer trust, which subsequently increases buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

Similarly, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) demonstrated a significant indirect effect on Consumer Buying Behaviour through Consumer Trust with $\beta = 0.130$, $t = 4.720$, and $P < 0.001$. The findings suggest that positive online reviews and peer recommendations improve consumer trust, ultimately influencing purchasing behaviour. Among all indirect relationships, Social Media Marketing (SMM) reported the strongest indirect effect on Consumer Buying Behaviour through Consumer Trust with $\beta = 0.281$, $t = 9.432$, and $P < 0.001$. The results indicate that social media interactions, influencer promotions, and online engagement significantly strengthen trust, which subsequently encourages consumers to purchase electronic gadgets. The statistically significant indirect effects confirm the mediating role of Consumer Trust between digital marketing dimensions and Consumer Buying Behaviour.

Table 11 presents the specific indirect effects of the proposed mediation relationships within the structural model. Specific indirect effect analysis evaluates whether Consumer Trust (CT) significantly mediates the relationship between the digital marketing dimensions and Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB). The findings indicate that Consumer Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Digital Content Marketing (DCM) and Consumer Buying Behaviour with $\beta = 0.199$, $t = 6.801$, and $P < 0.001$. This result implies that digital content marketing influences buying behaviour indirectly through enhancing consumer trust. Similarly, the relationship between Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and Consumer Buying Behaviour was significantly mediated by Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.130$, $t = 4.720$, $P < 0.001$). Positive online reviews and digital recommendations therefore contribute toward purchase behaviour by strengthening trust among consumers.

The mediation effect was strongest in the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Consumer Buying Behaviour through Consumer Trust with $\beta = 0.281$, $t = 9.432$, and $P < 0.001$. The findings demonstrate that social media activities significantly influence consumer buying behaviour because they enhance trust toward brands, products, and online purchasing platforms. Since all indirect paths reported significant t-values and P-values below 0.05, the mediating role of Consumer Trust was statistically supported for all proposed relationships. These findings confirm that trust functions as an important psychological mechanism connecting digital marketing activities with consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The present study examined the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets using PLS-SEM. The findings revealed that Social Media Marketing (SMM), Digital Content Marketing (DCM), and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) significantly influence Consumer Trust (CT), which subsequently affects Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB). The results indicated that Social Media Marketing demonstrated the strongest influence on Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.413$, $P < 0.001$). The findings suggest that social media advertisements, influencer promotions, and interactive online communication substantially enhance consumer confidence toward electronic gadgets and online purchasing platforms. These results are consistent with earlier studies which reported that social media engagement and influencer credibility significantly shape consumer perceptions and trust in digital purchasing environments (Ahmad et al., 2026; Bajpai and Mishra, n.d.). Digital Content Marketing also demonstrated a significant positive influence on Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.294$, $P < 0.001$). The

Table 9: Path coefficient

Structural path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-values
CT->CBB	0.679	0.679	0.026	25.955	0.000
DCM->CT	0.294	0.293	0.042	7.035	0.000
EWOM->CT	0.192	0.192	0.039	4.916	0.000
SMM->CT	0.413	0.414	0.041	10.197	0.000

Table 10: Total indirect effect

Structural Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-values
DCM->CBB	0.199	0.199	0.029	6.801	0.000
EWOM->CBB	0.130	0.131	0.028	4.720	0.000
SMM->CBB	0.281	0.281	0.030	9.432	0.000

Table 11: Specific indirect effect

Structural Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-values
DCM-> CT->CBB	0.199	0.199	0.029	6.801	0.000
EWOM-> CT->CBB	0.130	0.131	0.028	4.720	0.000
SMM-> CT->CBB	0.281	0.281	0.030	9.432	0.000

findings indicate that informative product reviews, comparison videos, tutorials, and digital product demonstrations improve consumer understanding and reduce uncertainty regarding electronic gadgets. The results support the findings of Hidayat et al. (2024), who observed that informative and engaging digital content positively affects consumer confidence and online purchase-related behaviour.

Similarly, Electronic Word-of-Mouth exhibited a significant positive relationship with Consumer Trust ($\beta = 0.192$, $P < 0.001$). Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets frequently rely on online reviews, customer ratings, and peer recommendations before making purchase decisions. Positive eWOM therefore strengthens consumer confidence and minimizes perceived risk associated with online shopping. These findings are aligned with the results of Nyagadza et al. (2023), who reported that information quality and online consumer recommendations significantly influence purchase intention and digital trust.

The study further found that Consumer Trust has a strong positive effect on Consumer Buying Behaviour ($\beta = 0.679$, $P < 0.001$). The findings imply that consumers are more likely to purchase electronic gadgets when they perceive online platforms, product information, and digital communication as trustworthy and secure. Similar findings were reported by Rangaswamy et al. (2021), who found that trust and information reliability significantly influence online purchase behaviour in the electronic goods industry. The mediation analysis confirmed that Consumer Trust significantly mediates the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and Consumer Buying Behaviour. Among the indirect effects, Social Media Marketing reported the strongest mediation effect through Consumer Trust, indicating that digital engagement and social interaction substantially shape online buying behaviour in electronic gadget markets. The R^2 results revealed that Social Media Marketing, Digital Content Marketing, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth collectively explain 57.6% of the variance in Consumer Trust, while Consumer Trust explains 46.0% of the variance in Consumer Buying Behaviour. These findings demonstrate satisfactory explanatory power of the proposed model in predicting consumer behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between digital marketing dimensions and consumer buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings confirmed that Social Media Marketing, Digital Content Marketing, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth significantly influence Consumer Trust, which subsequently affects Consumer Buying Behaviour toward electronic gadgets (Sarstedt et.al. 2019).

Among all digital marketing dimensions, Social Media Marketing emerged as the strongest predictor of Consumer Trust, highlighting the increasing influence of social media interaction, influencer communication, and online engagement in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. The results further revealed that Digital Content Marketing and Electronic Word-of-Mouth positively contribute toward trust formation by improving information quality, transparency, product understanding, and consumer confidence within digital purchasing environments. The study also established that Consumer Trust acts as a significant mediating mechanism between digital marketing activities and consumer buying behaviour. This finding indicates that consumers are more likely to purchase electronic gadgets when they perceive online platforms, digital communication, and product-related information as reliable, authentic, and secure. In contemporary digital markets, trust therefore represents a critical psychological factor influencing online consumer decision-making.

The structural model demonstrated satisfactory explanatory and predictive power, indicating that digital marketing dimensions substantially contribute toward explaining consumer trust and online buying behaviour. The findings further emphasize that young and technologically active consumers increasingly depend on digital platforms, online reviews, influencer recommendations, and interactive content while evaluating and purchasing electronic gadgets.

The study contributes significantly to the growing literature on digital marketing and online consumer behaviour by developing and empirically validating a trust-based consumer behaviour framework within the Indian electronic gadgets market. The integration of Social Media Marketing, Digital Content Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Buying Behaviour within a unified PLS-SEM framework strengthens the theoretical and practical understanding of digitally influenced purchasing behaviour (Hulland, 1999).

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that electronic gadget firms, e-commerce platforms, and digital marketers should prioritize trust-oriented digital strategies, interactive social media communication, high-quality content creation, and positive online customer engagement in order to strengthen consumer relationships and improve purchase outcomes in highly competitive digital markets.

6.1. Practical Implications

The findings of the present study offer important practical implications for marketers, e-commerce firms, digital advertisers, and electronic gadget companies operating in increasingly competitive digital markets. The results clearly indicate that digital marketing activities significantly shape consumer trust and online buying behaviour toward electronic gadgets.

The firms should give greater strategic importance to social media marketing because it emerged as the strongest predictor of consumer trust. Electronic gadget companies should invest in interactive social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, short-video promotions, live demonstrations, and customer engagement activities to strengthen brand credibility and consumer relationships. Consumers increasingly rely on social media platforms for product evaluation, recommendations, and purchase-related decisions; therefore, firms maintaining

active and transparent digital interaction are more likely to gain consumer confidence and long-term loyalty. The businesses should prioritize informative and customer-oriented digital content marketing strategies. Product comparison videos, tutorials, feature demonstrations, technical reviews, and user-focused content help consumers better understand electronic gadgets and reduce uncertainty during online purchasing. Well-structured digital content improves product transparency and strengthens consumer confidence toward brands and online platforms. The electronic gadget sellers and e-commerce platforms should actively encourage positive electronic word-of-mouth by improving product quality, after-sales services, delivery efficiency, and customer support systems. Online reviews and customer ratings significantly influence trust formation and purchase decisions in digital environments. Consumers purchasing electronic gadgets often evaluate peer experiences before making final purchase decisions; therefore, maintaining positive customer feedback becomes essential for sustaining competitive advantage.

The firms should strengthen transaction security, payment reliability, privacy protection, and transparent communication practices because consumer trust was found to be a major determinant of online buying behaviour. Secure and trustworthy online environments increase customer confidence and encourage repeated purchasing behaviour in electronic commerce platforms. The findings also highlight the growing importance of trust-centered digital strategies within India's expanding digital economy. Policymakers, digital businesses, and e-commerce regulators may utilize these findings to improve consumer protection mechanisms, strengthen digital transaction security, and enhance trust in online marketplaces. As digital commerce continues to expand across urban and semi-urban regions, building consumer trust will remain essential for sustainable growth in electronic gadget markets.

6.2. Future Research Directions

The present study provides several directions for future research in the area of digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour. The future studies may incorporate additional constructs such as perceived risk, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, perceived value, online impulse buying behaviour, technology readiness, and consumer engagement to develop broader and more comprehensive behavioural models. Such variables may provide deeper understanding of psychological and emotional factors influencing online purchasing decisions.

The future researchers may examine the moderating influence of demographic and behavioural factors such as age, gender, educational background, income level, digital literacy, and internet usage experience. These variables may help explain differences in digital purchasing behaviour among diverse consumer groups. The comparative studies across different geographical regions, states, or countries may provide broader insights into cultural and regional differences in digitally influenced consumer behaviour. Consumer trust and online buying patterns may vary significantly across developed and emerging digital markets. The future research may adopt longitudinal research designs to examine how consumer trust and digital buying behaviour evolve over time with changing technologies, artificial intelligence-based marketing systems, and rapidly developing digital communication platforms. Future studies may extend the proposed framework to other sectors such as fashion, healthcare, tourism, banking, online education, and food delivery services to examine the applicability of digital trust models across different industries.

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