



A Study on the Influence of Digital Marketing Tools on Consumer Engagement and Purchase Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing has become an important way for businesses to reach customers, build relationships with them, and influence their purchasing decisions. This study aims to understand how four major digital marketing tools—social media marketing, email and SMS marketing, search advertising and search engine optimization (SEO), and influencer marketing—affect consumer engagement and purchase behaviour.

The study collected primary data from 200 respondents through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using Microsoft Excel with statistical techniques such as the chi-square test of independence, one-way ANOVA, and linear regression.

The results of the chi-square test revealed a significant relationship between consumers' preferred digital marketing tools and their purchase decisions ($\chi^2 = 19.34$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$). A significant association was also found between gender and purchase decisions ($\chi^2 = 5.79$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.016$). The one-way ANOVA results showed that consumer engagement differed significantly across the digital marketing tool groups ($F = 10.56$, $p < 0.001$). However, no statistically significant difference in purchase behaviour was observed among different age groups ($F = 1.86$, $p = 0.137$).

The regression analysis further indicated that consumer engagement was the strongest predictor of purchase behaviour, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.55 ($p < 0.001$). The five predictors included in the regression model jointly explained 33.2% of the variation in purchase behaviour.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital marketing tools may influence consumers' buying decisions by encouraging greater engagement with brands. Therefore, businesses should focus not only on promoting their products through digital platforms but also on creating meaningful interactions and positive customer experiences. The study also highlights opportunities for future research to examine additional factors that may influence consumer engagement and purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Digital marketing tools, consumer engagement, purchase behaviour, social media marketing, influencer marketing, chi-square test, ANOVA, linear regression.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The spread of internet access, smartphones and social platforms has changed the way consumers discover, evaluate and buy products. Firms that once relied on one-way mass media now communicate through interactive channels that let consumers respond, share and co-create content. Digital marketing, broadly understood as the use of internet-based and mobile channels to promote products and build customer relationships, has therefore moved from a supplementary activity to a core element of marketing strategy (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Because digital channels generate data on every interaction, marketers can target, personalise and measure at a level that was not possible with traditional media. At the same time, consumers face an abundance of messages and are selective about the brands they pay attention to. In this setting, engagement (the extent to which consumers interact with, and emotionally invest in, a brand's communications) is widely regarded as a bridge between exposure to marketing and eventual purchase (Brodie et al., 2011).

1.2 Digital Marketing Tools

Firms use a wide range of digital tools. This study focuses on four that are commonly used by consumer-facing businesses:

- **Social media marketing:** brand pages, posts, short videos, stories and paid social advertisements on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and X (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).
- **Email and SMS marketing:** direct, permission-based messages such as offers, cart reminders and newsletters.
- **Search engine advertising and optimisation (SEO/SEM):** paid and organic visibility when consumers search for products or information.
- **Influencer marketing:** promotion of products by individuals with an established following, whose recommendations are perceived as more personal than brand-generated messages.

1.3 Consumer Engagement and Purchase Behaviour

Consumer engagement is treated in this study as the degree of attention, interaction and involvement a consumer shows towards a brand's digital content, for example by clicking, liking, commenting, sharing, subscribing or revisiting. Purchase behaviour refers to the consumer's tendency to buy, including the intention to purchase, the likelihood of repeat purchase and willingness to recommend, and, in a simple form, whether a purchase was actually made after exposure to digital marketing.

1.4 Need and Significance of the Study

Marketing budgets are increasingly shifted to digital channels, yet managers still need evidence on which tools actually engage consumers and which translate engagement into sales. Evidence that distinguishes the effect of each tool, and that tests whether engagement is the mechanism through which tools influence buying, helps firms allocate budgets more carefully. The study also contributes to the academic literature by testing the relationships with simple, replicable statistical methods that can be reproduced in a spreadsheet.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Firms invest heavily in digital marketing tools, but it is not always clear whether these tools influence consumers uniformly, whether preference for a tool is linked to actual purchasing, and how much of the effect on purchase behaviour operates through engagement. This study addresses these questions empirically.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Digital Marketing and the Consumer Decision Journey

Kannan and Li (2017) offer a framework in which digital marketing affects consumers at multiple stages of the decision process, and highlight personalisation, interactivity and the role of consumer data. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) similarly describe the customer experience as a journey across touchpoints before, during and after purchase, and argue that firms must manage these touchpoints in an integrated manner. Both perspectives imply that the effect of any single tool should be understood in terms of its contribution to the wider journey rather than as an isolated cause of sales.

2.2 Social Media Marketing

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classify social media into distinct types and discuss both the opportunities and the challenges they present for firms, in particular the loss of control over brand-related conversations. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) develop and validate a measure of consumer brand engagement in social media contexts, conceptualising it through cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions. These works support the view that social platforms are especially suitable for eliciting interaction, which motivates the hypothesis that consumers who prefer social media exhibit higher engagement.

2.3 Consumer Engagement

Brodie et al. (2011) conceptualise customer engagement as a psychological state that emerges from interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal brand, and propose that engagement can lead to outcomes such as loyalty, satisfaction and advocacy. This positions engagement as a mediating construct between marketing activity and behavioural outcomes, which underpins the regression model used in this study.

2.4 Word of Mouth and Influencer Effects

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) investigate why consumers articulate themselves on online opinion platforms, showing that electronic word of mouth is driven by social and functional motives. Influencer marketing can be seen as a commercial extension of this peer-to-peer influence, since recommendations from a followed individual may be perceived as more credible or relatable than direct brand messages. Whether this perception translates into purchase is an empirical question addressed here.

2.5 Theoretical Foundations

Two theories that support the current study variables and relationship among them were, Theory of Planned Behaviour and Technology Acceptance Model. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) proposes that behaviour is shaped by intention, which in turn depends on attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control; digital content and peer recommendations can plausibly shape attitudes and norms towards buying. The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) explains adoption of technology through perceived usefulness and ease of use, and is relevant to consumers' willingness to use digital channels such as apps, search and social platforms for shopping.

2.6 Research Gap

Prior work tends to study one channel at a time, or engagement and purchase separately. Fewer studies compare several common tools in the same sample, test whether the purchase decision depends on the tool a consumer prefers, and assess how far engagement explains purchase behaviour once tool exposure is controlled. This study addresses that gap using an integrated set of chi-square, ANOVA and regression analyses.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The framework treats exposure to four digital marketing tools (social media, email/SMS, search ads/SEO and influencer marketing) as independent variables. Consumer engagement is modelled both as an outcome of tool exposure and as a predictor of the dependent variable, purchase behaviour. Demographic characteristics (gender and age group) are treated as grouping variables for the tests of association and difference.

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

3.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the profile of consumers exposed to digital marketing tools.
2. To study whether the purchase decision is associated with the preferred digital marketing tool and with gender.
3. To analyse whether consumer engagement differs across preferred digital marketing tools.
4. To analyse whether purchase behaviour differs across age groups.
5. To measure the influence of digital marketing tools and consumer engagement on purchase behaviour.

3.2 Hypotheses

Table 3.1: Null hypotheses

No.	Null hypothesis (H0)
H01	There is no significant association between the preferred digital marketing tool and the purchase decision.
H02	There is no significant association between gender and the purchase decision.
H03	There is no significant difference in mean consumer engagement across preferred digital marketing tools.
H04	There is no significant difference in mean purchase behaviour across age groups.
H05	Social media, email/SMS, search ads/SEO, influencer marketing and consumer engagement have no significant influence on purchase behaviour.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical (cross-sectional) research design based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire.

4.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population comprises consumers who use the internet and have been exposed to digital marketing in [study area, e.g., city/district]. A sample of 200 respondents was used, selected through [convenience / stratified / simple random] sampling. Data were collected during [survey period].

4.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire (Appendix A) was used, with three parts: (a) demographic profile and preferred digital tool; (b) statements on exposure to each of the four tools and on consumer engagement, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree); and (c) statements on purchase behaviour, together with a yes/no item on whether a purchase was made after exposure to digital marketing. Composite scores were computed as the mean of the items for each construct. Reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha ([report alpha for each construct; values of 0.70 or above are generally considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978)]).

4.4 Variables and Measurement

Table 4.1: Variables used in the study

Variable	Role	Measurement
Preferred digital tool	Grouping / independent	Nominal (4 categories)
Gender, Age group	Grouping	Nominal / ordinal categories
Purchase made after exposure	Categorical outcome	Yes / No
Social media, Email/SMS, Search ads/SEO, Influencer marketing	Independent	Composite Likert score (1-5)
Consumer engagement	Independent and mediating	Composite Likert score (1-5)
Purchase behaviour	Dependent	Composite Likert score (1-5)

4.5 Tools of Analysis

All analyses were carried out in Microsoft Excel using worksheet functions (COUNTIFS, CHIDIST, CHIINV, FDIST, FINV, LINEST, TDIST and CORREL), and were cross-checked against the Data Analysis ToolPak where available. The following techniques were used:

- **Percentage analysis and descriptive statistics** (mean, standard deviation) to respondents profile.
- **Chi-square test of independence** to test association between categorical variables, with Cramér's V as the effect size.
- **One-way ANOVA** to compare group means, with eta-squared (η^2) as the effect size.
- **Pearson correlation and linear regression** (simple and multiple) to measure the strength and direction of relationships and the influence of the independent variables on purchase behaviour.

All tests were conducted at the 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, responses were anonymous, and data were used only for academic purposes.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Profile of Respondents

Table 5.1: Demographic profile and tool preference (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	103	51.5%
	Female	97	48.5%
Age group	18-24	54	27.0%
	25-34	74	37.0%
	35-44	40	20.0%
	45 & above	32	16.0%
Preferred tool	Social Media	78	39.0%
	Email/SMS	30	15.0%
	Search Ads/SEO	49	24.5%
	Influencer Marketing	43	21.5%
Purchase made	Yes	100	50.0%
	No	100	50.0%

Interpretation: The sample is 51.5% male and 48.5% female. The largest age group is 25-34 years (37.0%). Social media is the most preferred tool (39.0%), followed by search ads/SEO (24.5%) and influencer marketing (21.5%), while email/SMS is preferred by 15.0%. Half of the respondents (50.0%) reported making a purchase after exposure to digital marketing.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 5.2: Mean and standard deviation of composite scores

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Social Media Marketing	3.52	0.70	1.2	5.0
Email/SMS Marketing	3.08	0.76	1.2	5.0
Search Ads/SEO	3.14	0.67	1.4	4.8
Influencer Marketing	3.00	0.72	1.0	5.0
Consumer Engagement	3.81	0.47	2.8	5.0
Purchase Behaviour	3.10	0.52	1.6	4.6

Interpretation: Mean scores lie above the scale mid-point of 3 for social media (3.52), and are close to the mid-point for the other tools (email/SMS 3.08, search ads/SEO 3.14, influencer marketing 3.00). Consumer engagement has the highest mean (3.81), and purchase behaviour a mean of 3.10. Social media therefore records the strongest exposure among the four tools.

5.3 Chi-Square Test of Independence

5.3.1 Preferred Digital Tool and Purchase Decision

H01: There is no significant association between the preferred digital marketing tool and the purchase decision.

Table 5.3: Preferred digital tool × purchase made (observed frequencies)

Preferred tool	Purchased	Not purchased	Total	% purchased
Social Media	50	28	78	64.1%
Email/SMS	12	18	30	40.0%
Search Ads/SEO	13	36	49	26.5%
Influencer Marketing	25	18	43	58.1%
Total	100	100	200	50.0%

Figure 5.1: Purchase rate by preferred digital tool

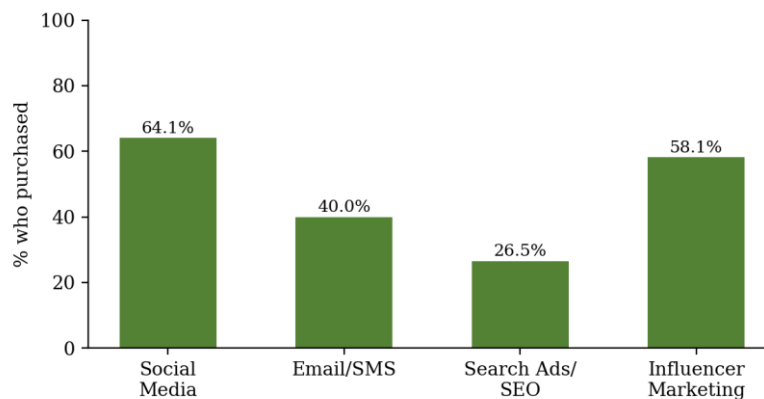


Table 5.4: Chi-square test results

Statistic	Value
Chi-square (χ^2)	19.341
Degrees of freedom	3
Critical value ($\alpha = 0.05$)	7.815
p-value	0.0002
Cramér's V	0.311
Decision	Reject H01

Interpretation: The calculated χ^2 (19.34) exceeds the critical value of 7.81 at 3 degrees of freedom, and the p-value (0.0002) is below 0.05. H01 is therefore rejected: the purchase decision is significantly associated with the preferred digital tool. Cramér's V of 0.31 indicates a medium-to-large

association (Cohen, 1988). Respondents who prefer social media (64.1%) and influencer marketing (58.1%) were the most likely to have purchased, whereas those who prefer search ads/SEO (26.5%) were the least likely.

5.3.2 Gender and Purchase Decision

H02: There is no significant association between gender and the purchase decision.

Table 5.5: Gender × purchase made (observed frequencies)

Gender	Purchased	Not purchased	Total	% purchased
Male	43	60	103	41.7%
Female	57	40	97	58.8%

Interpretation: $\chi^2 = 5.785$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.016$, Cramér's $V = 0.17$. As the p-value is below 0.05, H02 is rejected. In this sample, 58.8% of women reported purchasing after exposure compared with 41.7% of men, a small-to-medium effect.

5.4 One-Way ANOVA

5.4.1 Consumer Engagement across Preferred Digital Tools

H03: There is no significant difference in mean consumer engagement across preferred digital marketing tools.

Table 5.6: Group means of consumer engagement by preferred tool

Preferred tool	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Social Media	78	3.97	0.43
Email/SMS	30	3.55	0.41
Search Ads/SEO	49	3.63	0.43
Influencer Marketing	43	3.93	0.49

Figure 5.2: Mean consumer engagement by preferred digital tool

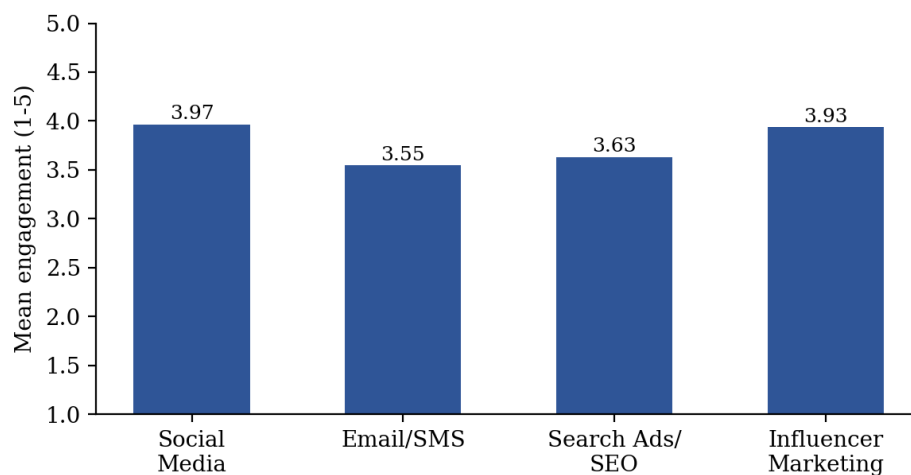


Table 5.7: ANOVA summary (engagement by preferred tool)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between groups	6.202	3	2.067	10.564	< 0.001
Within groups	38.353	196	0.196		
Total	44.555	199			

Interpretation: $F(3, 196) = 10.56$ exceeds the critical value of 2.65 and $p < 0.001$, so H_{03} is rejected. Mean engagement differs significantly across tool groups, with $\eta^2 = 0.139$, a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Consumers who prefer social media ($M = 3.97$) and influencer marketing ($M = 3.93$) are the most engaged; those who prefer email/SMS ($M = 3.55$) and search ads/SEO ($M = 3.63$) are the least. Because ANOVA only shows that at least one mean differs, a post-hoc test (for example Tukey's HSD or pairwise t-tests with Bonferroni correction) is recommended to identify exactly which pairs differ.

5.4.2 Purchase Behaviour across Age Groups

H04: There is no significant difference in mean purchase behaviour across age groups.

Table 5.8: Group means of purchase behaviour by age group

Age group	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
18-24	54	3.19	0.54
25-34	74	3.15	0.51
35-44	40	3.02	0.40
45 & above	32	2.96	0.59

Table 5.9: ANOVA summary (purchase behaviour by age group)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between groups	1.465	3	0.488	1.862	0.137
Within groups	51.415	196	0.262		
Total	52.880	199			

Interpretation: $F(3, 196) = 1.86$ is below the critical value of 2.65 and $p = 0.137$, so H_{04} is not rejected. Purchase behaviour does not differ significantly across age groups ($\eta^2 = 0.028$, a small effect). Although the mean declines slightly with age (from 3.19 in the youngest group to 2.96 in the oldest), the difference could be due to chance.

5.5 Correlation Analysis

Table 5.10: Pearson correlation matrix

	Social	Email/SMS	Search/SEO	Influencer	Engagement	Purchase
Social	1.00	-0.08	-0.08	-0.11	0.41	0.29
Email/SMS	-0.08	1.00	-0.10	0.04	0.09	-0.05

	Social	Email/SMS	Search/SEO	Influencer	Engagement	Purchase
Search/SEO	-0.08	-0.10	1.00	-0.06	0.19	-0.00
Influencer	-0.11	0.04	-0.06	1.00	0.37	0.23
Engagement	0.41	0.09	0.19	0.37	1.00	0.55
Purchase	0.29	-0.05	-0.00	0.23	0.55	1.00

Interpretation: Purchase behaviour has its strongest correlation with consumer engagement ($r = 0.55$), followed by social media ($r = 0.29$) and influencer marketing ($r = 0.23$). Email/SMS and search ads/SEO show almost no direct correlation with purchase behaviour. Engagement is correlated with social media ($r = 0.41$) and influencer marketing ($r = 0.37$). The low correlations among the four tool variables suggest that multicollinearity is not a concern.

5.6 Regression Analysis

5.6.1 Simple Linear Regression: Engagement and Purchase Behaviour

The simple model is: Purchase behaviour = $0.805 + 0.602 \times \text{Engagement}$.

Table 5.11: Simple regression results

Statistic	Value
Intercept (a)	0.805
Slope (b)	0.602
Correlation (r)	0.552
R ²	0.305
Standard error of estimate	0.431
t-statistic (slope)	9.33
p-value (slope)	< 0.001

Interpretation: A one-point increase in consumer engagement is associated with a 0.60-point increase in purchase behaviour. Engagement alone explains 30.5% of the variation in purchase behaviour, and the slope is statistically significant ($t = 9.33$, $p < 0.001$).

5.6.2 Multiple Linear Regression

H05: Social media, email/SMS, search ads/SEO, influencer marketing and consumer engagement have no significant influence on purchase behaviour.

Table 5.12: Model summary and ANOVA of the regression

Measure	Value
Multiple R	0.576
R ²	0.332
Adjusted R ²	0.314
Standard error	0.427

Measure	Value
Observations	200
F (5, 194)	19.247
Significance F	< 0.001

Table 5.13: Regression coefficients (dependent variable: purchase behaviour)

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	p-value	Std. Beta
Intercept	1.107	0.317	3.49	< 0.001	—
Social Media Marketing	0.038	0.052	0.73	0.469	0.052
Email/SMS Marketing	-0.073	0.041	-1.78	0.077	-0.107
Search Ads/SEO	-0.085	0.049	-1.75	0.082	-0.110
Influencer Marketing	0.019	0.049	0.38	0.701	0.026
Consumer Engagement	0.602	0.085	7.07	< 0.001	0.552

Interpretation: The model is statistically significant, $F(5, 194) = 19.25$, $p < 0.001$, and explains 33.2% of the variance in purchase behaviour (adjusted $R^2 = 0.314$), a large effect by Cohen's (1988) conventions. Only consumer engagement has a significant independent effect ($B = 0.602$, $\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficients for social media ($p = 0.47$), influencer marketing ($p = 0.70$), email/SMS ($p = 0.08$) and search ads/SEO ($p = 0.08$) are not significant at the 5% level once engagement is controlled. H05 is therefore rejected for consumer engagement but not for the four tool variables. This pattern is consistent with engagement acting as the channel through which digital tools influence buying; a formal mediation test (for example the Sobel test or bootstrapped indirect effects) would be needed to confirm this.

5.7 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 5.14: Summary of results

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H01: Tool $\times$ purchase	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 19.34$, $p < 0.001$	Rejected
H02: Gender $\times$ purchase	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 5.79$, $p = 0.016$	Rejected
H03: Engagement by tool	ANOVA	$F = 10.56$, $p < 0.001$	Rejected
H04: Purchase by age	ANOVA	$F = 1.86$, $p = 0.137$	Not rejected
H05: Predictors of purchase	Regression	$F = 19.25$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.332$	Rejected (engagement significant)

6. Findings and Discussion

1. The purchase decision is significantly associated with the preferred digital tool ($\chi^2 = 19.34$, $p < 0.001$). Purchase rates were highest among social media (64.1%) and influencer-marketing (58.1%) preferers and lowest among search-ads/SEO preferers (26.5%).
2. Gender is significantly associated with the purchase decision ($p = 0.016$), with a higher purchase rate among women (58.8%) than men (41.7%).

3. Consumer engagement differs significantly across tool groups ($F = 10.56$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$); social media and influencer-marketing users are the most engaged.
4. Purchase behaviour does not differ significantly across age groups ($p = 0.137$), suggesting that digital marketing works across age segments rather than only among the young.
5. Consumer engagement is the dominant predictor of purchase behaviour ($\beta = 0.55$); the four tools have no significant independent effect once engagement is included, and the model explains 33.2% of the variance.

Taken together, the findings suggest a two-step pattern: tools that interact with consumers (social media and influencers) generate higher engagement, and engagement, in turn, drives purchase behaviour. This is consistent with the conceptualisation of engagement as an outcome of interactive experiences that leads to behavioural outcomes (Brodie et al., 2011), and with the view that the effect of a marketing touchpoint should be understood within the broader customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The lack of a significant direct effect of email/SMS and search advertising should be interpreted cautiously: these tools may support conversion at specific stages of the journey that a general questionnaire does not capture.

7. Suggestions and Managerial Implications

- **Prioritise engagement, not just reach.** Since engagement is the strongest predictor of purchase behaviour, campaign design should aim at interaction (polls, contests, short videos, user-generated content, two-way responses) and not only impressions.
- **Invest in social media and influencer collaborations** for building engagement, particularly for consumers who show high responsiveness to these channels.
- **Use email/SMS and search ads for targeted conversion tasks**, such as cart reminders, renewals and high-intent search queries, and evaluate them with conversion-based metrics rather than engagement alone.
- **Tailor communication by gender**, as purchase responses differed between men and women, while maintaining a broad age reach because age did not significantly affect purchase behaviour.
- **Measure and track engagement metrics** (click-through rate, shares, time spent, repeat visits) and link them to sales data to refine budget allocation.

8. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

- The sample is limited to 200 respondents from study area and selected through sampling method, which limits generalisability.
- Data are self-reported and cross-sectional, so causal claims cannot be established; the regression shows association, not causation.
- Only four digital tools were examined; other tools such as mobile apps, video streaming advertising and chatbots were not covered.
- Future studies could use larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal or experimental designs, post-hoc tests, mediation analysis, structural equation modelling, and actual transaction data in place of self-reported purchase.

9. Conclusion

This study examined how digital marketing tools influence consumer engagement and purchase behaviour using chi-square, ANOVA and regression analyses in Excel. The results indicate that the tool a consumer prefers is linked to whether they buy, that engagement varies by tool, and that engagement is the strongest determinant of purchase behaviour, with the five predictors together explaining 33.2% of its variance. For practitioners, the message is that digital marketing pays off when it engages consumers; for researchers, it points towards mediation-based models of the tool-engagement-purchase pathway.

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[Verify each reference against the original source and format it in the style your institution requires (APA, Harvard, etc.). Add the additional studies you cite in Chapter 2.]

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