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Digital Marketing Mix, Brand Image, and Customer Experience Shaping Purchase Intention in Medan

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how the digital marketing mix, brand image, and customer experience relate to purchase intention through customer trust and perceived value among e-commerce consumers in Medan, Indonesia.

Research methodology: A cross-sectional online survey yielded 385 valid responses through purposive sampling. The measurement and structural models were assessed using partial least squares structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 4.0, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples for indirect effects.

Results: All eleven direct paths were positive and statistically significant. The six indirect effects through trust and perceived value had confidence intervals excluding zero, consistent with complementary partial mediation. The model explained 62.7% of the variance in purchase intention. Customer experience had the largest estimated total association among the three antecedents.

Conclusions: The results support coordinated attention to digital marketing, brand perceptions, and customer experience, together with trust and value evaluations.

Limitations: Cross-sectional self-reports and non-probability sampling restrict causal interpretation and generalization beyond the sampled consumers.

Contribution: Drawing on contemporary customer experience theory and the integrative customer-perceived-value framework, this study specifies trust and value as parallel organismic pathways within the stimulus–organism–response model. It provides a context-specific account of how evaluations of digital touchpoints relate to purchase intention.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Customer Experience, Customer Trust, Digital Marketing Mix, Purchase Intention*

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1. Introduction

Digital technologies connect marketing communications, online marketplaces, and customer interactions across the purchase journey. Research agendas therefore call for examining how digital marketing creates consumer responses across interconnected touchpoints, rather than treating individual promotional tools as isolated influences (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Kannan, 2017). Social media adds interactions among consumers, brands, and platforms to this process (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). For e-commerce businesses, understanding purchase intention consequently requires attention to both marketing inputs and consumers' evaluations of online exchanges.

Purchase intention represents consumers stated willingness and likelihood to buy; it is distinct from an observed transaction. Research on social commerce identifies trust as an important correlate of this intention, while meta-analytic evidence shows that the influence of electronic word of mouth depends on characteristics such as information usefulness and trust in the message (Hajli, Sims, Zadeh, & Richard, 2017; Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2020). These findings motivate an integrated examination of marketing-related perceptions, customer experience, and the psychological pathways connecting them to purchase intention.

Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, provides the urban setting for this study. Recent Indonesian evidence shows that convenience, benefits, and perceived risk are relevant to purchase intention on Bukalapak (Ahyani & Solihin, 2025). Other studies distinguish platform trust from retailer trust among Generation Z consumers and report that mediation by social media marketing is not supported in every product setting (Lady, Hefri Ariyanto, & Olivia, 2026; Sigalingging & Tj, 2026). These context-dependent findings justify examining Medan consumers directly, without assuming that results from other cities, platforms, or consumer segments will transfer unchanged.

The digital marketing mix concerns the coordinated presentation of products, prices, promotion, and access to the offering through digital channels (Kannan, 2017). Brand image captures consumers' associations and evaluations of a brand; recent Marketing 4.0 research places brand image alongside identity, integrity, and interaction in explaining customer responses (Dash, Kiefer, & Paul, 2021). Customer experience concerns responses across touchpoints throughout the customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In this study, its indicators capture consumers' evaluations of usability, personalization, support, delivery, and post-purchase engagement.

The Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) framework organizes the proposed relationships. Contemporary applications link characteristics of online environments to internal evaluations and subsequent responses (Islam & Rahman, 2017; Phamthi, Nagy, & Ngo, 2024). Here, perceived digital marketing practices, brand image, and evaluations of prior customer experience are antecedent inputs; trust and perceived value are parallel organismic states; and purchase intention is the response. Because brand image and experience are themselves consumer perceptions, this is an S-O-R-informed ordering of constructs rather than a claim that all three antecedents are objectively measured external stimuli.

Trust represents confidence in the online exchange partner, whereas perceived value concerns whether the benefits of an offering justify the monetary and non-monetary sacrifices it requires (Blut, Chaney, Lunardo, Mencarelli, & Grewal, 2024; Soleimani, 2022). These mechanisms are related but conceptually distinct: confidence that a seller will perform is different from judging that an offering is worthwhile. Studies of live-streaming commerce link perceived value, trust, and engagement, while research on online shopping also treats trust and value as context-sensitive moderators (Baidoun & Salem, 2024; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Their roles therefore need to be specified and tested rather than assumed.

The present study addresses a focused integration problem. Recent customer experience theory separates touchpoints, context, and the qualities of consumers' responses, and customer journey research calls for greater coherence across these perspectives (De Keyser, Verleye, Lemon, Keiningham, & Klaus, 2020; Mele, Hollebeek, Di Bernardo, & Spena, 2025). At the same time, contemporary value research emphasizes the joint interpretation of benefits, sacrifices, and overall evaluations (Blut et al., 2024). The unresolved question examined here is whether marketing mix, brand image, and experience evaluations are associated with purchase intention through both trust and value within one Medan sample. The study does not assume that dual mediation is theoretically unprecedented. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the direct relationships of the digital marketing mix, brand image, and customer experience with purchase intention; assess their relationships with customer trust and perceived value; examine the relationships of trust and value with purchase intention; and estimate the six corresponding indirect relationships. Its contribution is a

context-specific evaluation of parallel trust and value pathways, interpreted considering contemporary customer experience and perceived-value theory.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Theoretical foundation and contemporary developments

Contemporary SOR applications explain how consumers process online environmental cues through internal states before expressing behavioral intentions (Islam & Rahman, 2017; Phamthi et al., 2024). This organizing logic is complemented by recent customer experience theory. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) distinguish experiences from their antecedents and evaluative outcomes, while Keyser et al. (2020) organize experience research around touchpoints, context, and qualities. Mele et al. (2025) further integrate customer journey research through a conceptual framework and research agenda. Together, these developments require a clear account of what is experienced, what is evaluated, and which behavioral response is modeled.

The present model treats recalled evaluations of digital practices, brand associations, and customer encounters as antecedents of current trust and value judgments. Trust represents confidence in the exchange partner; value represents a benefit–sacrifice evaluation (Blut et al., 2024; Soleimani, 2022). Modeling them in parallel tests whether each retains an indirect association with purchase intention when the other is included. It does not test a sequential trust-to-value pathway. This conceptual distinction also addresses concerns about overlap among experience constructs and their outcomes raised by (Hollebeek, Sarstedt, Menidjel, Urbonavicius, & Dikcius, 2024). The cross-sectional design evaluates associations consistent with this ordering but cannot establish its temporal sequence.

2.2 Digital Marketing Mix (DMM)

The digital marketing mix refers to the coordinated use of product, price, promotion, and place in digitally mediated exchanges (Kannan, 2017). Product involves descriptions, images, and specifications; price concerns clarity and perceived competitiveness; promotion covers online communications and offers; and place concerns platform access and distribution. These elements can influence how consumers understand an offering and evaluate an exchange. In an Indonesian digital-product setting, Boangmanalu and Indrawati (2025) examine marketing mix elements together with differences in education and monthly allowance, illustrating the contextual nature of consumer responses.

Theoretical work on digital content marketing links valuable brand-related content with consumer engagement, trust, and value-related outcomes (Hollebeek, Srivastava, & Chen, 2019). Research on influencer communications likewise connects message value and credibility with trust in branded content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Indonesian evidence links digital marketing and sales promotion to purchase decisions through brand awareness (Handryani & Tj, 2026), while customer reviews and flash-sale promotions have been studied through consumer attitudes on Shopee (Wulandari & Isa, 2025). These related mechanisms motivate, but do not by themselves establish, the specific trust and perceived-value pathways proposed here. Accordingly:

H₁: The digital marketing mix has a significant positive effect on customer trust

H₂: The digital marketing mix has a significant positive effect on perceived value

H₃: The digital marketing mix has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

2.3 Brand Image (BI)

Brand image refers to consumers' associations and overall impressions of a brand, including its reputation, perceived quality, visual identity, and emotional meaning. Digital branding research places these associations within a wider system of interactions and customer evaluations (Dash et al., 2021). Brand-related cues can also shape how consumers interpret online experiences, with brand trustworthiness conditioning responses to website design (Bleier, Harmeling, & Palmatier, 2019). In the present study, brand image is a perception-based antecedent rather than an objective characteristic of the seller. Recent research connects social media marketing, brand trust, and brand equity, supporting the relevance of relational evaluations in digital branding (Ebrahim, 2020). A favorable

image may signal dependable performance and make expected benefits more credible, providing a rationale for links with trust and value. However, evidence on brand awareness and purchase intention does not imply that every brand-related mediation pathway is significant (Sigalingging & Tj, 2026). The following hypotheses therefore test these proposed relationships in the Medan context:

H_4: Brand image has a significant positive effect on customer trust

H_5: Brand image has a significant positive effect on perceived value

H_6: Brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

2.4 Customer Experience (CE)

Customer experience concerns responses generated across encounters with a firm before, during, and after purchase (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Voorhees et al., 2017). Contemporary theory distinguishes these responses from the touchpoints that trigger them and from subsequent evaluative outcomes (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). The present indicators focus on retrospective evaluations of website usability, personalization, customer support, delivery, and post-purchase engagement. They represent a bounded operationalization of digital encounter experience, rather than every sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social dimension of experience.

Online experience design can influence purchasing responses, with informativeness, entertainment, social presence, and sensory appeal interacting with product and brand characteristics (Bleier et al., 2019). A process perspective on online satisfaction also emphasizes the importance of the broader service sequence (Pham & Ahammad, 2017). Live-streaming research links technological affordances to purchase intention and experiential value to trust and engagement (Sun, Shao, Li, Guo, & Nie, 2019; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). These findings support testing whether favorable experience evaluations relate to confidence in the seller, perceived benefits, and purchase intention. Thus:

H_7: Customer experience significantly and positively affects customer trust

H_8: Customer experience significantly and positively affects perceived value

H_9: Customer experience has a significantly positive effect on purchase intention

2.5 Customer Trust (CT)

Customer trust reflects confidence in the online exchange partner's ability, benevolence, integrity, and overall trustworthiness. A synthesizing review identifies trust and mistrust as central to understanding e-commerce relationships (Soleimani, 2022). Meta-analytic evidence supports a positive association between trust and purchase intention while recognizing differences across trust objects and social commerce contexts (Wang, Shahzad, Ahmad, Abdullah, & Hassan, 2022). Recent Indonesian research further distinguishes retailer trust from platform trust (Lady et al., 2026). This study assesses customer trust as a single construct and tests the following relationship:

H_{10}: Customer trust significantly and positively affects purchase intention

2.6 Perceived Value (PV)

Perceived value is the consumer's assessment of benefits relative to sacrifices such as price, time, effort, and risk. An integrative meta-analysis shows the importance of distinguishing benefits, sacrifices, and overall value, as well as the contextual nature of their relationships with customer outcomes (Blut, Chaney, Lunardo, Mencarelli, & Grewal, 2024). Online-shopping research connects convenience and non-monetary costs with value evaluations, while Indonesian evidence links perceived convenience and benefits with purchase intention (Ahyani, & Solihin, 2025; Baidoun, & Salem, 2024). The present construct covers functional value, emotional value, value for money, and overall value. Accordingly:

H_{11}: Perceived value has a significantly positive effect on purchase intention

2.7 Mediating Roles of Customer Trust and Perceived Value

Within the proposed SOR-informed model, trust and perceived value are parallel internal evaluations through which marketing-related antecedents may be associated with purchase intention. Digital

content marketing theory provides a basis for linking communications with trust and value-related outcomes (Hollebeek et al., 2019); live-streaming research demonstrates related, though not identical, relationships among value, trust, and engagement (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). The model therefore estimates each specific indirect path while retaining the direct paths. Bootstrap assessment of these paths follows contemporary guidance for multiple mediation in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) (Carrión, Nitzl, & Roldán, 2017). Therefore:

H_{12}a-c: Customer trust mediates the relationship between (a) digital marketing mix, (b) brand image, and (c) customer experience and purchase intentions

H_{13}a-c: Perceived value mediates the relationship between (a) digital marketing mix, (b) brand image, and (c) customer experience and purchase intentions

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional explanatory design to examine the proposed relationships within a structural equation modeling framework. The research was conducted among e-commerce consumers residing in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. This location defines the study's empirical scope. A single-city purposive sample does not establish representativeness of Indonesian e-commerce consumers or permit causal inference.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of active e-commerce consumers residing in Medan who had made at least one online purchase within the preceding six months. A purposive (non-probability) sampling technique was employed, guided by the following inclusion criteria such as aged 18 years or above, residing in the Medan metropolitan area, having made at least one e-commerce transaction within the past six months, and using at least one major Indonesian e-commerce platform namely Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and Bukalapak. The final analytical sample comprised 385 valid responses. The model has five paths directed toward purchase intention. Although a ten-times heuristic would imply a threshold of 50 observations, this rule alone does not establish statistical power or sample adequacy; more defensible assessments consider anticipated effect sizes and the estimation setting (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019; Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Accordingly, the sample size is reported without claiming that exceeding a heuristic guarantees representativeness or adequate power for every indirect effect.

3.3 Measurement Instrument

The survey instrument adapted established measurement domains for the study context. All items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was translated into Bahasa Indonesia using back-translation to support semantic equivalence. A pilot test with 40 respondents assessed clarity and initial reliability and led to minor wording refinements. The digital marketing mix was measured with five indicators covering product presentation, pricing transparency, digital promotion, platform accessibility, and distribution reliability. Brand image comprised four indicators of reputation, visual identity, quality perception, and emotional association. Customer experience comprised five indicators of usability, personalization, customer support, delivery, and post-purchase engagement. These domains are described using contemporary digital marketing and customer journey (Kannan, 2017; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) perspectives (De Keyser et al., 2020).

Customer trust comprised four indicators of perceived ability, benevolence, integrity, and overall trustworthiness. Perceived value comprised four indicators of functional value, emotional value, value for money, and overall value. These domains correspond to trust and value conceptualizations reviewed by Soleimani (2022) and Blut et al. (2024). Purchase intention comprised willingness to purchase, likelihood of purchase, intention to recommend, and future purchase. Four customer satisfaction indicators were also collected and are reported in Tables 1 and 2. Satisfaction is not included in H_1-H_{13} or in the reported direct and indirect paths; no mediation claim involving satisfaction is made.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected between March and May 2025 using an online self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The survey link was disseminated through social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp groups, and Facebook communities targeting Medan-based consumers, university mailing lists, and e-commerce community forums. Respondents were screened using the inclusion criteria before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained digitally, and the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed. Of the 426 responses received, 41 were excluded due to incomplete data or failure to meet the screening criteria, yielding 385 usable responses (a 90.4% completion rate).

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis focused on explaining variance in purchase intention and estimating the specified direct and indirect associations. PLS-SEM supports this variance-oriented assessment, provided that measurement quality, model specification, and inferential limitations are considered (Hair et al., 2019). Its use does not eliminate the need to evaluate sampling limitations, construct overlap, or the assumptions required for causal interpretation. The analysis proceeded in two stages: assessment of the measurement model for reliability and validity, followed by assessment of the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). Specific indirect effects were evaluated with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% confidence intervals following PLS-SEM mediation guidance (Carrión et al., 2017). A confidence interval excluding zero was treated as evidence of a nonzero statistical indirect effect. Predictive performance is conceptually separate from explained variance and requires an appropriate prediction assessment (Shmueli et al., 2019).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Respondent Demographics

The demographic profiles of the 385 respondents are as follows. In terms of gender, 58.4% were female and 41.6% were male, reflecting the gender distribution typical of Indonesian e-commerce users. The age distribution indicated that the majority of respondents (42.3%) were aged 21–30, followed by 26.5% aged 31–40, 18.7% aged 18–20, and 12.5% aged over 40. Regarding education, 48.3% held a bachelor's degree, 26.2% had completed senior high school, 15.8% held a master's degree or higher, and 9.7% held a diploma degree. The monthly income distribution showed that 31.2% earned IDR 3–5 million, 27.8% earned IDR 5–10 million, 22.1% earned below IDR 3 million, and 18.9% earned above IDR 10 million. In terms of e-commerce platform usage, Shopee was the most frequently used platform (62.3%), followed by Tokopedia (21.8%), Lazada (9.6%), and other platforms (6.3%).

4.1.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

Table 1. Measurement model assessment results

Construct / Item	Loading	CR	rho_A	Cronbach α	AVE
Digital Marketing Mix		0.912	0.889	0.878	0.678
DMM1 – Product presentation	0.843				
DMM2 – Pricing transparency	0.821				
DMM3 – Digital promotion	0.856				
DMM4 – Platform accessibility	0.798				
DMM5 – Distribution reliability	0.779				
Brand Image		0.921	0.897	0.885	0.745
BI1 – Brand reputation	0.879				
BI2 – Visual identity	0.856				
BI3 – Quality perception	0.891				
BI4 – Emotional association	0.825				
Customer Experience		0.935	0.916	0.908	0.742
CE1 – Website usability	0.867				

Construct / Item	Loading	CR	rho_A	Cronbach α	AVE
CE2 – Personalization	0.841				
CE3 – Customer support	0.878				
CE4 – Delivery experience	0.912				
CE5 – Post-purchase engagement	0.808				
Customer Trust		0.917	0.892	0.879	0.735
CT1 – Perceived ability	0.859				
CT2 – Benevolence	0.872				
CT3 – Integrity	0.891				
CT4 – Overall trustworthiness	0.804				
Perceived Value		0.905	0.876	0.858	0.706
PV1 – Functional value	0.862				
PV2 – Emotional value	0.845				
PV3 – Value-for-money	0.871				
PV4 – Overall value	0.779				
Customer Satisfaction		0.897	0.858	0.845	0.688
CS1 – Overall satisfaction	0.856				
CS2 – Expectation confirmation	0.832				
CS3 – Comparison with alternatives	0.812				
CS4 – Repeat purchase propensity	0.817				
Purchase Intention		0.924	0.903	0.891	0.752
PI1 – Willingness to purchase	0.889				
PI2 – Likelihood of purchase	0.871				
PI3 – Intention to recommend	0.843				
PI4 – Future purchase	0.865				

Table 1 presents the measurement model assessment results, including indicator loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), rho_A, Cronbach alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Following the PLS-SEM evaluation guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2019), the indicator loadings range from 0.779 to 0.912, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.708 and indicating satisfactory indicator reliability. Internal consistency reliability is also established, as CR values range from 0.897 to 0.935, Cronbach alpha values range from 0.845 to 0.908, and rho_A values range from 0.858 to 0.916, all exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE values range from 0.678 to 0.752, surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.50 and supporting convergent validity across the measured constructs. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity based on the reported evaluation criteria. The assessment also includes customer satisfaction as an additional measured construct, while the hypothesized structural relationships focus on the six primary constructs examined in the study.

Table 2. Discriminant validity: Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios

	DMM	BI	CE	CT	PV	CS	PI
DMM	–						
BI	0.672	–					
CE	0.714	0.689	–				
CT	0.658	0.721	0.748	–			
PV	0.693	0.654	0.701	0.764	–		
CS	0.612	0.638	0.672	0.698	0.723	–	
PI	0.641	0.703	0.732	0.789	0.756	0.714	–

Table 2 presents the discriminant validity assessment using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of correlations (HTMT) to evaluate whether the constructs are empirically distinguishable from one another. The reported HTMT values range from 0.612 to 0.789, all below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity based on the recommended criterion. The highest HTMT value of 0.789 is observed between Customer Trust and Purchase Intention, while the lowest

value of 0.612 occurs between Digital Marketing Mix and Customer Satisfaction. These findings suggest that the constructs maintain sufficient conceptual and empirical distinctiveness, supporting their use in subsequent structural model analysis. However, as emphasized by Franke and Sarstedt (2019), threshold-based assessments should be distinguished from statistical inference. Since HTMT confidence intervals are not reported, the findings support discriminant validity based on the cutoff criterion rather than formal inferential testing.

4.1.3 Structural Model Evaluation

The reported inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values range from 1.342 to 2.871, below the 5.0 guideline, suggesting no severe collinearity under this criterion (Hair et al., 2019). The model explains 62.7% of the variance in purchase intention (R^2 = 0.627), 54.3% in customer trust (R^2 = 0.543), and 49.8% in perceived value (R^2 = 0.498). These are in-sample explanatory statistics. Out-of-sample predictive performance is not established by R^2 and requires a procedure such as PLSpredict (Shmueli et al., 2019). The reported Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.054, below the commonly used 0.08 guideline. This is a descriptive diagnostic and does not by itself establish that the theoretical model is correct. The f^2 values in Table 3 range from 0.031 to 0.156; using conventional benchmarks of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, most reported effects are small and the CE → CT effect reaches the medium benchmark (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Structural model: Direct effects and hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Decision
H_1	DMM → CT	0.287	4.812	<0.001	0.114	Supported
H_2	DMM → PV	0.254	4.231	<0.001	0.089	Supported
H_3	DMM → PI	0.142	2.587	0.010	0.031	Supported
H_4	BI → CT	0.312	5.478	<0.001	0.138	Supported
H_5	BI → PV	0.231	3.892	<0.001	0.074	Supported
H_6	BI → PI	0.168	3.012	0.003	0.042	Supported
H_7	CE → CT	0.329	5.897	<0.001	0.156	Supported
H_8	CE → PV	0.298	4.956	<0.001	0.121	Supported
H_9	CE → PI	0.156	2.745	0.006	0.036	Supported
H_{10}	CT → PI	0.267	4.534	<0.001	0.098	Supported
H_{11}	PV → PI	0.243	4.127	<0.001	0.082	Supported

As presented in Table 3, all eleven direct paths (H_1–H_{11}) are positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Customer experience has the largest coefficient for customer trust (β = 0.329, $p < 0.001$), followed by brand image (β = 0.312, $p < 0.001$) and the digital marketing mix (β = 0.287, $p < 0.001$). Customer experience also has the largest coefficient for perceived value (β = 0.298, $p < 0.001$). For purchase intention, the coefficients for trust (β = 0.267) and value (β = 0.243) are larger than those for the three antecedents. These rankings describe point estimates; statistical differences between coefficients were not tested.

4.1.4 Mediation Analysis

Table 4 reports the six specific indirect effects estimated using 5,000 bootstrap resamples. All 95% confidence intervals exclude zero, supporting $H_{12}a$-c and $H_{13}a$-c as statistical indirect relationships. The interpretation follows contemporary guidance on multiple mediation in PLS-SEM (Carrión et al., 2017).

Table 4. Indirect effects: Mediation analysis with 5,000 bootstrap resamples

Hyp.	Indirect Path	β indirect	t-value	95% CI	Decision
$H_{12}a$	DMM → CT → PI	0.077	3.214	[0.031, 0.128]	Supported
$H_{12}b$	BI → CT → PI	0.083	3.567	[0.038, 0.134]	Supported
$H_{12}c$	CE → CT → PI	0.088	3.712	[0.041, 0.142]	Supported
$H_{13}a$	DMM → PV → PI	0.062	2.876	[0.024, 0.108]	Supported

Hyp.	Indirect Path	β indirect	t-value	95% CI	Decision
$H_{13}b$	BI → PV → PI	0.056	2.634	[0.019, 0.101]	Supported
$H_{13}c$	CE → PV → PI	0.072	3.089	[0.029, 0.121]	Supported

The positive indirect paths occur alongside positive, statistically significant direct paths, a pattern consistent with complementary partial mediation (Carrión et al., 2017). Summing the reported direct and indirect coefficients gives estimated total effects of 0.281 for DMM → PI, 0.307 for BI → PI, and 0.316 for CE → PI. Customer experience therefore has the largest total point estimate among the three antecedents. Without bootstrap contrasts of the total effects, their ordering should not be interpreted as a statistically established difference. The cross-sectional evidence also does not establish causal mediation.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Direct Effects of Digital Marketing Mix, Brand Image, and Customer Experience

The positive direct and indirect relationships are consistent with the proposed SOR-informed model. The findings suggest that marketing-related perceptions and experience evaluations are associated with purchase intention both directly and through trust and perceived value. Interpretation remains conditional on the reported model and measurement results; the design does not establish that changing one antecedent would cause the reported change in intention. The digital marketing mix is positively associated with customer trust (H_1: β = 0.287, p < 0.001) and perceived value (H_2: β = 0.254, p < 0.001). These relationships are compatible with the proposed trust- and value-related consequences of useful digital content and with research on message credibility and consumer trust (Hollebeek, Sarstedt, Menidjel, Urbonavicius, & Dikcius, 2024;Lou, & Yuan, 2019). Indonesian studies of digital marketing, sales promotion, online reviews, and flash sales identify other mediating mechanisms, including brand awareness and consumer attitudes (Handryani, & Tj, 2026; Wulandari, & Isa, 2025). The present findings add parallel trust and value estimates without implying that these alternative mechanisms are interchangeable.

Brand image is positively related to trust (H_4: β = 0.312, p < 0.001), perceived value (H_5: β = 0.231, p < 0.001), and purchase intention (H_6: β = 0.168, p = 0.003). It has the second-largest coefficient for trust, after customer experience. This pattern is compatible with relational accounts linking digital marketing, brand trust, and brand evaluations (Ebrahim, 2020). Brand-related mechanisms nevertheless remain context-sensitive: Sigalingging and Tj (2026) report positive direct relationships with purchase intention but no mediation through social media marketing. Their different constructs and outcome pathways limit direct comparison with the present model.

Customer experience has the largest coefficients for trust (H_7: β = 0.329, p < 0.001) and value (H_8: β = 0.298, p < 0.001). Contemporary experience theory places these evaluations within encounters distributed across the customer journey (Becker, & Jaakkola, 2020; Mele, Hollebeek, & Spena, 2025). Research on online experience design and live-streaming affordances also links the characteristics of interactions with purchasing responses (Bleier, Harmeling, & Palmatier, 2019; Sun, Shao, Li, Guo, & Nie, 2019). The present indicators suggest that usability, service support, and fulfillment deserve attention together, but the study does not isolate the causal contribution of any individual touchpoint.

4.2.2 Mediating Roles of Customer Trust and Perceived Value

The six nonzero indirect paths indicate that trust and perceived value each contribute to the reported association between the three antecedents and purchase intention. Their joint inclusion provides a more differentiated interpretation than treating all favorable evaluations as a single mechanism. The trust-mediated point estimates are larger than the corresponding value-mediated estimates for all three antecedents; the largest is CE → CT → PI (β = 0.088). This pattern is consistent with meta-analytic evidence linking trust to purchase intention (Wang et al., 2022). Indonesian evidence also shows that platform and retailer trust can play different roles and that ratings or reviews need not operate through every proposed trust pathway (Lady et al., 2026). Because this study does not distinguish trust objects or test contrasts between indirect effects, it cannot establish that trust is universally the stronger mediator.

Perceived value also contributes a nonzero indirect association, including CE → PV → PI (β = 0.072; 95% CI [0.029, 0.121]). The finding is compatible with the broader benefit–sacrifice perspective synthesized by Blut et al. (2024). It also complements Indonesian evidence relating convenience and benefits to purchase intention (Ahyani & Solihin, 2025). Whereas Baidoun and Salem (2024) investigate trust and value as moderators, the present model treats them as mediators. These are different theoretical roles, and the current findings should be read as support for this specified pathway structure rather than a rejection of moderation or sequential alternatives.

4.2.3 Theoretical Implications

The first contribution is to connect contemporary customer experience theory with two explicitly differentiated evaluative pathways. The touchpoints context qualities framework and recent customer journey synthesis emphasize the need to specify how encounters relate to consumer responses (De Keyser et al., 2020; Mele et al., 2025). Within an SOR informed model, the present study estimates separate indirect associations through confidence in the exchange partner and judgments of value. This offers a bounded, context-specific elaboration of established theory, rather than introducing a new theory or claiming the first use of dual mediation.

Second, the study connects experience-based evaluation with the integrative customer-perceived-value perspective synthesized by Blut et al. (2024), while retaining trust as a distinct relational judgment. The six focal constructs are digital marketing mix, brand image, customer experience, customer trust, perceived value, and purchase intention. The evidence supports nonzero parallel indirect associations, but it does not validate a seven-construct structural model involving satisfaction, nor does it test a serial relationship between trust and value. These boundaries make the claimed theoretical contribution correspond to the reported hypotheses and paths.

Third, the Medan sample supplies contextual evidence relevant to recent Indonesian findings on convenience, trust objects, brand awareness, and mediation (Ahyani & Solihin, 2025; Lady et al., 2026; Sigalingging & Tj, 2026). The study also illustrates why measurement boundaries matter: the operationalization focuses on selected encounter evaluations, and some intention and satisfaction indicators encompass adjacent behaviors. This qualification is consistent with the theoretical and measurement concerns identified by Hollebeek et al. (2024). The results therefore motivate replication with clearer construct boundaries and comparisons across cities and platforms, rather than claims of universal generalizability.

4.2.4 Practical Implications

The findings suggest that e-commerce businesses serving Medan consumers should examine customer experience across website usability, personalization, support, delivery, and post-purchase engagement. Customer experience has the largest estimated relationships with trust and value among the three antecedents. Managers can use this pattern to prioritize diagnosis of service problems across the journey, while recognizing that the study does not estimate the returns to specific interventions or establish that one touchpoint is more influential than another.

Second, the significant role of brand image as a trust-building mechanism suggests that e-commerce firms should prioritize brand consistency across all digital touchpoints, maintain active reputation management strategies, and invest in brand-building communications that emphasize quality, reliability, and emotional connections with a culturally diverse consumer base in Medan. The parallel indirect relationships also suggest evaluating trust and value as separate managerial objectives. Clear product information, transparent prices, reliable fulfillment, accessible complaint handling, and credible customer feedback may address different consumer concerns. Their effectiveness should be evaluated through platform-level experiments or longitudinal monitoring before causal performance claims are made.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationships of the digital marketing mix, brand image, and customer experience with purchase intention through customer trust and perceived value among 385 e-commerce consumers in Medan. The reported PLS-SEM estimates support eleven positive direct paths and six positive indirect paths, consistent with complementary partial mediation. Customer experience has the largest estimated total association among the three antecedents, although differences between total effects were not formally tested. The theoretical contribution lies in evaluating distinct trust and value pathways within a contemporary account of digital experience and consumer evaluation. These findings describe cross-sectional associations and should not be interpreted as established causal mechanisms.

5.2 Research Limitation

The cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causal mediation. Purposive recruitment and a single-city sample restrict population generalization. Self-reported responses create a potential common method bias; specific statistical evidence excluding that concern is not reported. Measurement boundaries also require caution: PI3 concerns recommendation rather than purchasing itself, and CS4 concerns repeat-purchase propensity rather than satisfaction alone. Such overlap is relevant to contemporary concerns about experience-related construct validity (Hollebeek et al., 2024). Satisfaction is measured but has no reported structural paths, so its structural role cannot be evaluated. Finally, the study does not test platform, product-category, or demographic moderation, coefficient differences, or out-of-sample predictive performance.

5.3 Suggestion and Directions for Future Research

Future research should use longitudinal or experimental designs to assess temporal order and causal mechanisms. Replication across Indonesian cities and platforms should examine whether the parallel trust and value pathways persist across product categories, consumer groups, and trust objects. Instrument refinement should distinguish purchase intention from recommendation and satisfaction from repeat-purchase propensity, with clear item provenance and construct definitions. Researchers should also compare parallel and sequential mediation models and evaluate prediction using procedures such as PLSpredict. Observed purchases and post-purchase behavior would help establish whether the associations with stated intentions extend to actual consumer decisions.

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Author Contributions

SB contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the research design, formulation of the hypotheses, preparation of the research instrument, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, drafting of the original manuscript, critical revision of the manuscript, and approval of the final version for publication.

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