

FROM CLICK TO PURCHASE: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON REPURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING IN MSMES

Rahmi Yuliana¹, Muliawan Hamdani²

Management, Faculty of Business and Economic, BPD University, Semarang, Indonesia^{1,2}

E-mail: rahmiyuliana26@gmail.com

Abstract: This study addresses the inconsistency in research findings regarding the influence of digital marketing on repurchase intention, particularly for MSME products sold online. The research uses a quantitative approach with a positivist methodology and a conceptual model that requires empirical validation. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 300 MSME consumers in Central Java, a region selected for its high repurchase intention for online MSME products. The findings show that while digital marketing does not directly and significantly influence repurchase intention, it has a strong, positive, and significant effect on electronic word of mouth marketing (eWOM). The study reveals that the impact of digital marketing on repurchase intention is only significant when it is mediated by electronic relationship marketing (ERM). This means that digital marketing's effectiveness in driving repeat purchases depends on its ability to first build trust, foster emotional connections, and create customer loyalty through digital platforms. The research concludes that for long-term success, businesses should focus on digital marketing strategies that nurture and develop customer relationships after the initial sale, rather than solely on attracting consumers for a first-time purchase.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing; Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing; Repurchase intention; MSMEs*

Submitted: 2025-12-04; Revised: 2025-12-30; Accepted: 2025-12-31

1. Introduction

In industry 4.0, it shows that MSMEs face challenges, where MSMEs have limited knowledge of digital and technology, there are different levels of education from MSMEs and in general MSMEs are older and there are consumer behavior habits in purchasing MSME products (Parra-Sánchez & Talero-Sarmiento, 2024). This phenomenon encourages many MSMEs to switch to digital platforms including social media, e-commerce and short message applications to communicate with customers. This process is not easy for MSMEs because it requires technological adaptation, changes in marketing perspectives, so it requires MSMEs to be able to adapt to digital marketing features, platforms and structured marketing strategies.

The important problem in this study is related to the inconsistency of research results on the influence of digital marketing on repurchase intention. The inconsistency of findings is the basis of this study, to be used as an empirical test of MSME products sold online through

digital marketing to increase repurchase intention. First, in previous studies that there was no significant influence on repurchase intention, this was because previous product purchases were made conventionally with the Covid-19 outbreak, product sales were diverted through digital marketing using e-commerce. (Samuel & Anita, 2023) Second, online marketing theory emphasizes that marketing strategies use digital technology and the internet in promoting and marketing products to consumers (Rawat & Rawat, 2017). Third, online marketing theory is the activity of marketing products or services using the internet and website networks, involving various digital platforms such as websites, social media, WhatsApp, email to reach wider consumers. (Udowong Eke, 2022) Thus, this study has a challenge that must be resolved to develop electronic marketing from an online marketing perspective.

The novelty of this study is that it aims to fill the gap in research findings between digital marketing and repurchase intention. Therefore, electronic marketing is added as a mediating variable to significantly increase repurchase intention.

In this study, electronic marketing is expected to be an effective factor in increasing repurchase intention. More specifically, this study aims to test the proposed conceptual model, which demonstrates that digital marketing and electronic marketing can drive repurchase intention. This will ultimately impact the repurchase intention of MSME products online.

Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

1. How does digital marketing influence electronic word of mouth marketing?
2. How does digital marketing influence repurchase intention?
3. How can electronic word of mouth marketing mediate digital marketing and repurchase intention?

2. Research Method

This research will employ quantitative research with a positivist approach. The reason for using a positivist approach is that the conceptual model developed in this study requires empirical validation. The unit of analysis will be consumers in Central Java who purchase MSME products in the trade sector through digital platforms. The reason for selecting Central Java Province is based on the high repurchase intention of MSME products online. The research data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents, namely the residents of Central Java Province. Data collection using a questionnaire, the population in this study is consumers who use e-commerce for transactions, with a target of 300 MSME consumers. Data Collection (Online Questionnaire, Interviews, E-commerce Data Analysis)

Hypothesis Development

Digital Marketing Influence Electronic Marketing

The relationship between digital marketing and eWOM is synergistic. Digital marketing is a powerful tool for directing, facilitating, and triggering the creation of eWOM. meanwhile, the eWOM generated from digital marketing efforts strengthens, validates, and expands the reach of brand messages. Savvy companies use digital marketing not only to promote products but also to create customer experiences that foster positive conversations among consumers, ultimately becoming a valuable source of eWOM (Kwarteng et al., 2024; Purwana et al., 2017). Based on the explanation provided, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Digital Marketing have a positive effect to electronic word of mouth Marketing

Digital Marketing Influence Repurchase Intention

Digital marketing has a positive effect on repurchase intention. The appearance of products in digital marketing encourages customers to repurchase Mawaddah et al (2024). This study aligns with findings on the significant role of digital marketing as a media element in marketing, where digital marketing can analyze target customers repurchase intentions. Displaying product advertisements through digital marketing aims to attract consumer attention and encourage repurchase intention (Khoziyah & Lubis, 2021). Based on the explanation provided, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Digital Marketing have positive effect to Repurchase Intention

Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing Mediate Digital Marketing and Repurchase Intention

Without positive eWOM, a digital advertising campaign alone may only result in an initial purchase, but it doesn't guarantee repeat purchase intentions. eWOM, triggered by digital marketing, serves as a bridge that transforms awareness and interest into customer trust and loyalty. Based on the explanation provided, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing Mediate Digital Marketing and Repurchase Intention

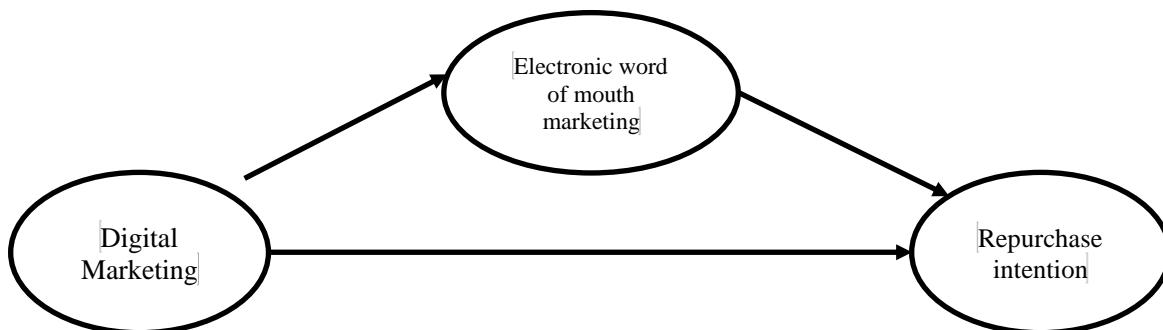


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Respondent Demographics

Data analysis shows that respondents were predominantly female (195 people) and the majority were aged 25-30 years (218 people), reflecting a young, productive demographic. In terms of education, most respondents had a bachelor's degree (152 people) or high school equivalent (98 people). In terms of occupation and income, most respondents worked as private sector employees (128 people) and had a monthly income between Rp2,000,000 and Rp4,000,000 (163 people). Regarding online shopping behavior, Shopee was the most popular platform, used by 184 people. Many respondents also used a combination of Shopee and Tokopedia (86 people). Overall, the frequency of use of these platforms was very high, with 129 respondents reporting using them more than 15 times.

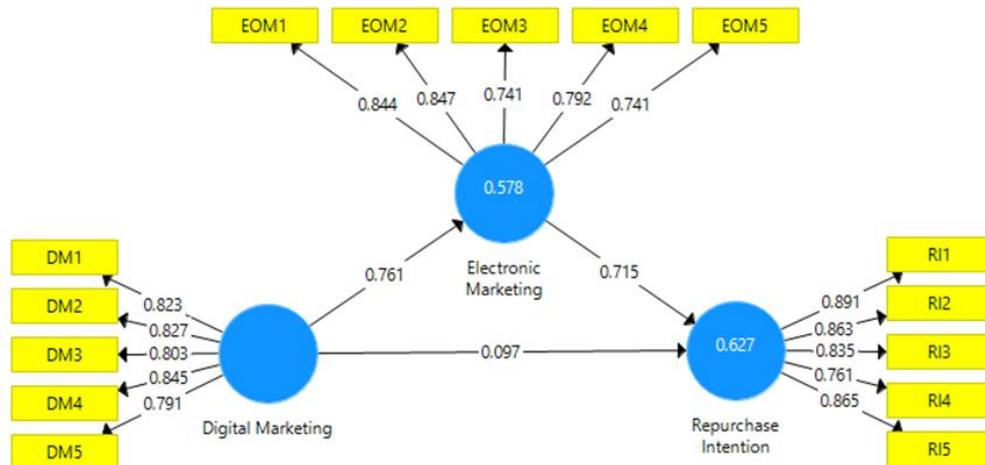


Figure 2. Path Analysis Result

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is assessed using the outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. All indicators have strong outer loadings, well above 0.70, indicating excellent convergent validity.

DM1-DM5 (Latent Variable 1): All loadings are above 0.70 (0.823, 0.827, 0.803, 0.845, 0.791).

EOM1-EOM5 (Latent Variable 2): All loadings are above 0.70 (0.844, 0.847, 0.741, 0.792, 0.741).

RI1-RI5 (Latent Variable 3): All loadings are above 0.70 (0.891, 0.863, 0.835, 0.761, 0.865).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

All AVE values are well above 0.50, indicating that the latent constructs are able to explain more than 50% of the variance in their indicators.

Latent Variable 1: 0.669

Latent Variable 2: 0.631

Latent Variable 3: 0.713

Internal Consistency Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha. All Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were well above 0.70, indicating very high internal consistency of the indicators measuring the same construct.

Latent Variable 1: Cronbach's Alpha 0.876, CR 0.910

Latent Variable 2: Cronbach's Alpha 0.853, CR 0.895

Latent Variable 3: Cronbach's Alpha 0.899, CR 0.925

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Fornell-Larcker Criterion:

The square root of the AVE of each construct (diagonal value) must be greater than the correlation between that construct and all other constructs (non-diagonal value). All Fornell-Larcker criteria were met, indicating that the constructs were empirically well separated.

Latent Variable 1: AVE Root 0.818 Correlation with Latent Variable 2: 0.761 (0.818>0.761)
Correlation with Latent Variable 3: 0.641 (0.818>0.641)

Latent Variable 2: AVE Root 0.794 Correlation with Latent Variable 1: 0.761 (0.794>0.761)
Correlation with Latent Variable 3: 0.789 (0.794>0.789)

Latent Variable 3: AVE Root 0.844 Correlation with Latent Variable 1: 0.641 (0.844>0.641)
Correlation with Latent Variable 2: 0.789 (0.844>0.789)

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

HTMT must be ≤ 0.90 (or a more conservative ≤ 0.85). All HTMT values are below 0.90. Although 0.896 is close to the limit, it still technically meets the looser criteria (≤ 0.90).

Latent Variable 1 - Latent Variable 2: 0.874 (≤ 0.90)

Latent Variable 1 - Latent Variable 3: 0.714 (≤ 0.90)

Latent Variable 2 - Latent Variable 3: 0.896 (≤ 0.90)

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

The structural model assesses the relationship between latent constructs and the model's predictive power.

Path Coefficients and Significance

p-value or t-statistic. Generally, a p-value <0.05 (or t-statistic >1.96 for significance at the 5% level) indicates a significant relationship. The results indicate a positive and strong relationship, and highly statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

Results:

Latent Variable 1 to Latent Variable 2: Path Coefficient: 0.761 ; p-value: 0.000

Conclusion: The relationship is positive and strong, and highly statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

Latent Variable 1 to Latent Variable 3: Path Coefficient: 0.097 ; p-value: 0.115

Conclusion: This relationship is very weak and not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Latent Variable 2 to Latent Variable 3: Path Coefficient: 0.715 ; p-value: 0.000

Conclusion: The relationship is positive and strong, and highly statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

R-squared (R²) / Coefficient of Determination

from the model image shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. $R^2 \geq 0.67$ is considered substantial. $R^2 \geq 0.33$ is considered moderate. $R^2 \geq 0.19$ is considered weak. The model has good to substantial predictive power for the dependent variable.

Results:

Latent Variable 2: $R^2=0.578$. This is a moderate to substantial R^2 value, indicating that Latent Variable 1 explains approximately 57.8% of the variation in Latent Variable 2.

Latent Variable 3: $R^2=0.627$. This is a substantial R^2 value, indicating that Latent Variable 1 and Latent Variable 2 together explain approximately 62.7% of the variation in Latent Variable 3.

3.2. Discussion

The Effect of Digital Marketing Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that digital marketing has a strong and significant influence on electronic relationship marketing. This is indicated by a positive path coefficient of 0.761, meaning that any improvement in digital marketing strategy will directly improve the quality of electronic customer relationships. A p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is highly significant and not coincidental, indicating that digital marketing is a key factor in building and maintaining digital connections with audiences.

The positive and significant influence demonstrated by this data has profound strategic implications for modern businesses. The path coefficient of 0.761 is not just a number; it reflects a powerful synergy: that efforts invested in digital marketing directly yield results in stronger customer relationships. This demonstrates that digital marketing is not just a tool for reaching a mass audience but also a platform for building deep, personalized interactions. Prompt responses to customer reviews, personalized content via email, and consistent engagement on social media create the impression that a brand cares and listens.

Each digital marketing indicator serves as a pillar supporting the success of electronic relationship marketing. For example, consumers' ease in searching for products (Digital Marketing Indicator 1) is a crucial first step. A smooth and satisfying product search experience creates a positive first impression. Meanwhile, engaging content or advertising (Digital Marketing Indicator 2) serves to attract attention and maintain interest, which is the foundation for building an emotional bond. Positive or negative reviews on social media (Digital Marketing Indicator 3) are tangible evidence of customer interaction. Brands that proactively respond to these reviews demonstrate empathy and care, which are at the heart of sustainable relationships.

Transforming Consumers from Audience to Brand Advocates

Relationships built through effective digital marketing strategies don't stop at loyalty. Ultimately, they can transform customers into brand advocates. The Electronic Relationship Marketing indicator, which indicates that customers become loyal and recommend products to others (E-RM indicator 7), is the end result of a journey that begins with simple digital interactions. This demonstrates that digital marketing has transcended its purpose as a mere promotional tool and evolved into an instrument for building a solid community around a brand. In other words, digital marketing doesn't just sell products; it also sells experiences and value, ultimately creating a customer base that not only makes repeat purchases but also actively promotes the brand organically.

The interrelationship between indicators reinforces this conclusion. Effective digital marketing strategies—such as providing easy access to products, engaging advertising content, and responding to reviews—directly facilitate the goals of e-relationship marketing: establishing relationships, building trust, and engaging on a personal level. Furthermore, the use of email and e-commerce for personalized promotions helps foster emotional bonds, which ultimately fosters customer loyalty and encourages product recommendations, creating lasting and strong connections in the digital world.

The Effect of Digital Marketing on Repurchase Intention

Digital marketing does not have a significant influence on repurchase intention. This is evident from the very low path coefficient of 0.097 and the p-value of 0.115, which is greater than 0.05. Although digital marketing provides access and engaging content, its impact on

consumer repurchase intention is weak (Purwana et al., 2017). There are several logical reasons based on the indicators provided:

1. Access and Attractive Advertising (Digital Marketing Indicators 1 & 2) vs. Repurchase Intention:

Digital marketing indicators focus on the early stages of the consumer journey, namely awareness and interest. By providing broad access and engaging advertising, digital marketing is effective in capturing initial attention.

However, repurchase intention is the result of a satisfying post-purchase experience, such as good product quality, responsive customer service, and trust. Attractive advertising at the beginning does not necessarily guarantee future satisfaction with the product.

2. Social Media Reviews (Digital Marketing Indicator 3) vs. Repurchase Intention:

Both positive and negative reviews can influence purchase decisions, but their influence is stronger on first-time purchases than on repurchase intentions.

Consumers who have previously purchased a product tend to rely more on their personal experiences than on social media reviews when deciding to repurchase. Reviews may be a secondary consideration.

3. Promotions and Product Recall (Digital Marketing Indicators 4 & 5) vs. Repurchase Intention:

Promotions via email or e-commerce and product recall (Digital Marketing Indicators 4 & 5) can indeed encourage purchases, but do not guarantee long-term loyalty.

Repurchase intentions (Repurchase Intention Indicators 1, 2, and 3) are more often influenced by the perceived value of the product itself, rather than solely by promotions or recall. If the product does not meet expectations, subsequent promotions will be ineffective in encouraging repeat purchases. Consumers may be attracted solely by discount promotions, not because they are loyal to the product or brand.

In short, digital marketing may be successful in driving consumers to their first purchase, but it lacks the power to significantly influence their repeat purchase decisions.

Repurchase intention is driven more by internal factors directly related to the product and customer experience, such as satisfaction, quality, and trust, than by digital marketing strategies focused on initial attraction and promotion.

The Effect of Digital Marketing on Repurchase Intention through Electronic Word of Mouth Marketing

Digital Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Repurchase Intention through Electronic Relationship Marketing, which is acceptable. The analysis results show a mediation path coefficient of 0.715 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong and significant relationship between the three variables (Khoziyah & Lubis, 2021).

This hypothesis tests a mediation model, where Electronic Relationship Marketing (ERM) functions as an intermediary or mediator between Digital Marketing and Repurchase Intention. The results indicate that digital marketing does not directly influence repurchase intention, but rather works effectively by first building emotional connections and customer loyalty through digital platforms (ERM).

Electronic Relationship Marketing (ERM) plays a crucial role as a "bridge" connecting digital marketing efforts with the ultimate outcome of repurchase intention. Without this bridge, the impact of digital marketing on repurchase intention is insignificant, as seen in the previous analysis. Here are the specific roles of ERM in this process:

1. **Building Trust and Emotional Connection:** Digital marketing strategies that focus on personal interactions, such as responding to reviews on social media or sending relevant promotions, build trust. This trust forms the foundation for long-term relationships that ultimately motivate consumers to return.
2. **Creating Customer Loyalty:** Strong ERM, characterized by ongoing interaction and a sense of customer care, transforms consumers into loyal customers. Loyal customers not only purchase repeatedly but also become brand advocates who recommend products to others.
3. **Maintaining Brand Recall:** Through consistent digital communication, ERM ensures that the brand remains top-of-mind for consumers. This makes it easier for consumers to choose the same product in the future, directly influencing repurchase intention.

The results of this analysis provide clear strategic direction for marketers. The focus should not be solely on engaging advertising campaigns to drive the first purchase. Instead, investment should be shifted to digital marketing strategies designed to nurture and develop customer relationships after the initial sale. This includes:

- **Increasing Social Media Engagement:** Brands should be more proactive in responding to comments, engaging in discussions, and providing content relevant to audience interests.
- **Personalizing Communications:** Leveraging consumer data to send tailored offers or relevant product recommendations via email or apps.
- **Strengthening Digital Customer Service:** Providing easily accessible communication channels to resolve issues and demonstrate concern for the customer experience.

Thus, the impact of digital marketing on repurchase intention is not direct, but depends on how effectively the strategy builds relationships and trust through E-Relationship Marketing. This conclusion confirms that in the digital age, relationships are the most valuable currency for achieving long-term success.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that digital marketing does not directly influence repurchase intention. Its influence becomes significant only when mediated by electronic relationship marketing (ERM). This shows that an effective digital marketing strategy is not only about capturing consumers' attention (for example, through attractive advertising or promotions), but more importantly, about building relationships, trust, and ongoing interactions with them through digital platforms. In other words, strong digital relationships (ERM) are the key bridge that transforms digital marketing efforts into tangible repurchase intentions.

To increase repurchase intention, companies must focus on digital marketing strategies that focus on building and maintaining customer relationships. Specific recommendations include:

1. **Prioritize Social Media Interaction:** Don't just use social media for promotions. Be proactive in responding to comments, both positive and negative. Engage in discussions and demonstrate concern for the customer experience. This will build trust, which is the foundation for long-term relationships.
2. **Personalize Communication:** Leverage customer data to deliver personally relevant content or offers. For example, send a birthday email with a special discount code, or provide product recommendations based on purchase history. This will make customers feel valued and strengthen emotional bonds.

3. Improve the Quality of Digital Customer Service: Ensure communication channels such as chat, email, or direct messages on social media can respond to customer questions and complaints quickly and efficiently. Good after-sales service is key to driving repeat purchase intention.

By implementing these strategies, companies will not only attract new customers but also successfully convert them into loyal customers who will voluntarily return and recommend your products to others.

Author contribution: Rahmi Yuliana first author and corresponding author, Muliawan Hamdani as co author

Funding statement: PDP 2025 DRTPM.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to DRTPM for funding this research with the PDP 2025

References

Khoziyah, S., & Lubis, E. E. (2021). Pengaruh Digital Marketing Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Followers Online Shop Instagram @KPopConnection. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 10(1), 39–50.

Kwarteng, M. A., Ntsiful, A., Osakwe, C. N., & Ofori, K. S. (2024). Modeling the acceptance and resistance to use mobile contact tracing apps: a developing nation perspective. *Online Information Review*, 48(1), 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-10-2021-0533>

Mawaddah, W., Rini, E. S., & Sembiring, B. K. F. (2024). Pengaruh Social Media dan Kualitas Produk terhadap Repurchase Intention Melalui Kepuasan Pelanggan pada UMKM Alfahmi Konveksi. *J-MAS (Jurnal Manajemen Dan Sains)*, 9(1), 454. <https://doi.org/10.33087/jmas.v9i1.1674>

Parra-Sánchez, D. T., & Talero-Sarmiento, L. H. (2024). Digital transformation in small and medium enterprises: a scientometric analysis. *Digital Transformation and Society*, 3(3), 257–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DTS-06-2023-0048>

Purwana, D., Rahmi, R., & Aditya, S. (2017). Pemanfaatan Digital Marketing Bagi Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Dan Menengah (UMKM) Di Kelurahan Malaka Sari, Duren Sawit. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Madani (JPMM)*, 1(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jpmm.001.1.01>

Rawat, K., & Rawat, V. S. (2017). ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH COMMUNICATION. 4, 1–5.

Samuel, S., & Anita, T. L. (2023). The relationship between trends in technology use and repurchase intention. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 7(1), 449–456. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.9.001>

Udowong Eke, C. (2022). The Influence of Online Marketing on Marketing Performance of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Akwa Ibom State Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 05(01), 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v5-i1-16>