



The Effect of Digital Marketing on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness among Domestic Tourists in Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

The study looks at how digital marketing practices shape consumer buying behavior, but it kind of passes through brand awareness as a mediating variable. The reason this topic feels worth looking into is that Myanmar domestic tourism businesses are now more and more using digital platforms, still there isn't much solid empirical evidence that clearly shows how these practices influence tourists purchase intention. In this research, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework is used, basically it says external stimulation works its way into internal psychological stuff and then turns into some sort of behavioral action. Here digital marketing practices are treated as the stimulus, brand awareness becomes the organism, and purchase intention is the response. Digital marketing practices are measured through entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The data came from 300 domestic tourists using a structured questionnaire, then it was analyzed using SPSS and AMOS via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results suggest that all dimensions of digital marketing have a positive influence on brand awareness, and eWOM shows up as the strongest predictor among them. Also, most of those dimensions do not directly affect purchase intention, except eWOM which does. Meanwhile, brand awareness itself positively affects purchase intention, and it also mediates the links between digital marketing practices and purchase intention.

Keywords: Digital Marketing practices, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention, eWOM

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has changed marketing ways in the global tourism industry. Tourism businesses are increasingly using social media, mobile apps, digital ads, interactive experiences, and electronic word of mouth, also called eWOM, to talk with tourists and nudge their travel-related choices. According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), digital and social media marketing have become sort of the core of modern consumer communication because they allow companies to reach, involve, and influence customers more directly. And in tourism that matters even more, since many tourists rely on online platforms to search for destination details, compare options, read reviews, and shape purchase intentions before they finally decide on where to go (Armutcu et al., 2023; Cheng, 2025).

Digital marketing practices are multidimensional, in a way, since they involve several forms of communication and engagement. In this research digital marketing practices include entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement and eWOM. Entertainment is basically enjoyable and attractive digital content that grabs tourists' attention. Interaction is when tourists and tourism brands talk back and forth through comments, messages, sharing, and other digital engagement activities. Trendiness shows how well digital platforms offer current and fashionable information. Advertisement means paid digital promotional messages, while eWOM is customer generated reviews, recommendations, and travel experiences that people share through digital platforms. These dimensions matter because they can boost tourists' exposure to tourism brands, reduce uncertainty and affect how tourists judge destinations and tourism services (Bilgin, 2018; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Armutcu et al., 2023).

Brand awareness is one key part of consumer-based brand equity. It is like the ability of consumers to recognize or recall a brand when they are deciding about a purchase (Keller, 2016). In the tourism sector, brand awareness is important because tourists tend to evaluate

intangible services, which they cannot actually experience prior to buying. Digital marketing may strengthen brand awareness by increasing brand visibility, building repeated exposure and pushing tourists to engage with brand related content. Recent studies hint that brand awareness can shape purchase intention and it may also help explain how marketing activities affect consumer decision-making (Chen et al., 2024; Ismael, 2025). So, brand awareness can be seen as a cognitive pathway through which digital marketing practices end up shaping tourists' purchase intention.

This research is steered by the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. Basically, the S-O-R framework clarifies how outside stimuli affect a person's internal psychological state, and then that state leads to some behavioral response. Here digital marketing practices are treated as the stimuli, because they are outside marketing signals received by tourists. Brand awareness is the organism because it mirrors the internal cognitive condition created from exposure to digital marketing. Purchase intention is the response, because it becomes the behavioral result of tourists' assessment and decision process. The S-O-R framework fits this research because it offers a reasoned explanation of how digital marketing practices might influence purchase intention straight and also indirectly, via brand awareness (Vieira, 2013; Hu, 2026).

In Myanmar, digital marketing has become more and more important for tourism businesses, largely because domestic tourists are using digital platforms more often to search for travel information and make travel-related decisions. DataReportal (2025) illustrated that Myanmar had 33.4 million internet users and about 19.6 million social media user- identities in early 2025, and you can see the growing part of digital communication in the country. The Domestic Tourism Survey 2024 also indicates that domestic travel is still a meaningful part of Myanmar's tourism sector, with tourists travelling for leisure, business, pilgrimage and other reasons. However, even with this rising importance of digital

platforms, empirical research on the link between digital marketing practices, brand awareness, and purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists is still relatively thin.

Even though earlier studies discuss digital marketing and consumer behavior, some gaps still show up. First, a lot of studies treat digital marketing as one overall construct, not really as separate dimensions. Second, existing studies often focus on the direct effect of digital marketing on purchase intention but they never quite spell out, in a clean way, the mediating role of brand awareness. Third, there is not much empirical evidence yet from rising tourism markets such as Myanmar, so the whole picture still feels a bit fuzzy. These gaps signal that a study is needed to explore how entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM affect purchase intention through brand awareness, in the setting of Myanmar domestic tourism.

Therefore, this research examines the impact of digital marketing practices on purchase intention through brand awareness among domestic tourists in Myanmar. The study adds to tourism and digital marketing literature by using the S-O-R framework to explain how digital marketing practices shape tourists' cognitive reactions and behavioral outcomes. The results are also expected to support tourism marketers with practical suggestions, by illustrating how digital marketing can be used to strengthen brand awareness, and then encourage tourists' purchase intention, in a developing market environment.

Objectives of the Study

In this research, the general objective is basically to look at how digital marketing practices affect purchase intention, but the middle part is brand awareness, specifically among domestic tourists in Myanmar. The focus on the impact and the path in between are.

- (1) To find out how entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM affect brand awareness for Myanmar domestic tourists

- (2) To assess the direct impact of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM on purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists.
- (3) To study the influence of brand awareness on purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists
- (4) To examine how brand awareness acts as a mediator in the link between each digital marketing practice and purchase intention
- (5) To understand which digital marketing practice has the strongest pull-on brand awareness and purchase intention in the Myanmar domestic tourism setting.

Literature Review

Marketers currently utilize digital methods which have transformed into complex systems that include entertainment and social media platforms and user interaction and popular trends and online advertising and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) functions. The market recognizes these practices as strategic tools which allow consumers to interact with brands through value-based online content that enables active online participation (Alalwan, 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Tourism companies utilize digital marketing platforms as their primary advertising methods while their online platforms enable customers to create shared value through their travel stories and feedback (Leung et al., 2015; Xiang et al., 2015; Godey et al., 2016). Digital marketing enables travelers to assess tourism services before making their final purchasing decisions because they rely on digital marketing to process their travel experiences. Digital marketing practices function as fundamental elements which tourism companies use to understand how modern consumers behave in their businesses.

Entertainment

Digital marketing recognizes entertainment as a fundamental element which measures how marketing content creates enjoyable experiences through emotional connections and positive consumer experiences. Prior studies demonstrate that entertaining content enhances user engagement and fosters favorable brand attitudes which in turn lead to changes in consumer behavior (Kim & Ko, 2012; Ismail, 2017; Bilgin, 2018). Tourism destinations need digital content which combines visual beauty and emotional appeal to develop successful marketing strategies which attract visitors to their locations (Godey et al., 2016; Rather, 2021; Seo & Park, 2018). The content achieves two outcomes by capturing audience interest while building stronger emotional ties between consumers and tourism brands. Domestic travelers use social media more today, which makes entertainment-based digital strategies vital for companies to create consumer impressions and drive purchasing actions.

Interaction

The term interaction describes how digital platforms enable companies to communicate with their customers through two-way dialogue. Through interactive marketing, consumers are able to engage with brands via dialogue, feedback, and participation, thereby strengthening relational ties and enhancing brand engagement (Alalwan, 2018; Hajli, 2015; Kim & Johnson, 2016). Prior research indicates that higher levels of interaction lead to increased customer engagement which subsequently results in improved brand perceptions and better customer behavior. Interactive communication affects customer satisfaction and brand loyalty and purchase intention according to the research results from Algharabat et al. 2020 and Ismail 2017 and Yadav and Rahman 2018. Interactive digital communication functions as an essential tool within the tourism sector because it helps build trust with consumers while decreasing their fear of unknown elements in non-physical products. Tourists make their

purchasing decisions based on the trust and engagement which enhances their decision-making process.

Advertisement

Digital marketing uses advertising as its main tool to shape how customers assess products and services in online settings. The success of online advertising on social media platforms depends on three key attributes which include informative content and trustworthy sources and customized advertising because these factors drive customers to make purchasing decisions (Alalwan, 2018; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Peña-García et al., 2020). Online advertisements in tourism environments enable consumers to obtain current and specific information about destinations and services and special deals which helps them make better purchasing decisions. Tourists depend on all existing information to decrease their uncertainty about tourism products because these products lack physical presence (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2020; Stylos et al., 2017). The digital advertising strategies which organizations create with proper design methods enable customers to access information more easily and they affect how customers perceive products and make purchasing decisions which results in changes to tourism industry purchasing patterns.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

Consumers use online platforms to share their product reviews and recommendations and personal opinions, which create electronic word of mouth (eWOM) content that affects how other consumers make their purchasing decisions. Digital platforms use eWOM as an essential information source, which builds trust and credibility and creates perceived informational value to shape how people view them (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Filieri et al., 2015; Hajli, 2015). Travelers use peer-generated reviews to minimize their uncertainty which exists because of the inability to evaluate services before travel in the tourism industry. Tourists make their destination assessments and decide on their future actions based on online customer reviews and their decision to share experiences

which reveal sector and destination quality levels (Leung et al., 2015; Xiang et al., 2015; Rather, 2021). Digital tourism marketing now depends on eWOM as its main element because it creates consumer purchasing habits and product evaluation through trust-based decision-making.

Trendiness

The current trendiness of digital marketing content requires assessment because it delivers modern content that meets current consumer preferences. Digital platforms use trendy content to create value because it provides customers with fresh insights which they can use to assess brands according to research studies by Godey et al. 2016 and Seo and Park 2018 and Yadav and Rahman 2018. Travelers depend on recent updates to evaluate destinations and services and travel conditions therefore the tourism industry requires businesses to provide current information with changing content. Digital marketing strategies that emphasize trendiness enable tourism providers to enhance consumer perceptions and stimulate stronger purchase intentions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Leung et al., 2015; Rather, 2021). Trendiness serves as an informational element which operates as a symbolic representation of current relevance and innovative value because it influences customer perceptions and purchasing behavior within digital marketing platforms.

Brand Awareness

Brand recognition occurs when customers can identify and remember a brand name within its corresponding product category. The process of developing brand associations and customer attitudes and their subsequent behavior patterns, which Aaker described in 1996 and Keller in 2016 and Foroudi et al. in 2018, operates as a vital element of consumer-based brand equity. Digital marketing content which audiences see multiple times creates brand recognition through better product knowledge and improved memory retention. The cognitive reinforcement process helps build customer understanding, which enables them to make more certain

and better choices according to Godey et al. 2016 and Ismail 2017 and Kim and Ko 2012.

The online presence of digital marketing practices builds brand awareness because it allows customers to interact with brands through constant online communication. Users who interact with social media marketing campaigns create content which boosts brand visibility and brand recognition and brand recall according to Bilgin 2018 and Seo and Park 2018. Digital platforms serve as tools in the tourism industry because they allow destinations and service providers to use visual storytelling and user-generated content for creating authentic brand experiences which help people easily understand their brands according to Barreda et al. 2015 and Dwivedi et al. 2021 and Rather 2021. Brand awareness functions as a vital cognitive system, which establishes the connection between digital marketing activities and consumer behavioral results, which include their intention to buy products.

Purchase Intention

The intention to buy defines a consumer's active decision to purchase a specific product or service at a later time which researchers consider to be their most accurate measurement of future buying actions. The variable serves as an essential measurement tool which researchers use to track their marketing results (Dodds et al., 2014; Peña-García et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020). Digital purchase intent develops through several factors which include users' assessment of information quality and social factors and their views about brands and their emotional reactions to advertising (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hajli, 2015; Kim & Johnson, 2016). Consumers search online for brand information and customer reviews to decrease their product uncertainty about services which they cannot test before they use them in tourism (Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Stylos et al., 2017; Rather, 2021).

Brand awareness functions as the primary factor which determines whether customers will buy a product because it increases their brand knowledge and trust and

product confidence. Consumers who recognize a brand will assess it positively which makes them more likely to purchase its products (Foroudi et al., 2018; Keller, 2016; Seo & Park, 2018). Tourism brands use ongoing brand material delivery to create consumer trust which helps customers decide which products to buy (Bilgin, 2018; Godey et al., 2016; Ismail, 2017). The SOR framework operationalizes digital marketing functions to demonstrate how they drive consumer reactions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Kim & Johnson, 2016; Vieira, 2013). Digital marketing initiatives work as outside factors which create brand awareness results that start consumer buying actions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Kim & Johnson, 2016; Vieira, 2013).

The existing research shows that cognitive brand factors function as intermediaries which impact customer behavior in digital marketing environments. Social media marketing activities directly improve purchase intention through their effect on brand awareness and brand equity development (Algharabat et al., 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Seo & Park, 2018). Digital brand engagement leads to better brand recognition which makes people more likely to buy products and boosts their return visits to tourism sites (Barreda et al., 2015; Rather, 2021; Stylos et al., 2017). Researchers have not studied how different digital marketing dimensions create their combined impact in emerging tourism markets which use brand awareness as their connecting element between entertainment and other digital marketing dimensions (advertising and eWOM). The research creates an integrated model to show how different digital marketing strategies will affect Myanmar domestic tourists' purchase intention. The research helps to reveal how digital marketing activities shape tourist buying patterns in travel destinations.

The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness

Purchase The digital marketing activities produce an effect on consumer behavior which becomes evident through the brand awareness process that functions as a vital connection point between the two elements. The

cognitive brand awareness process in digital marketing enables marketing stimuli to create consumer responses which then result in purchasing decisions according to Keller 2016 and Foroudi et al 2018. Social media marketing activities improve brand awareness through their ability to create brand visibility and brand exposure and brand-based consumer interactions which create better brand knowledge structures according to previous studies. The enhanced awareness leads to changes in consumer attitudes which then guide their decisions to purchase products according to Bilgin 2018 and Godey et al 2016 and Seo and Park 2018.

The SOR framework from theoretical research provides a strong explanation for how this mediating relationship operates. Digital marketing activities function as external triggers which create changes in mental processes that develop brand awareness and lead to consumer behavior changes, particularly in their purchasing intent according to Djafarova and Rushworth 2017 and Vieira 2013. Research has shown that brand-related elements function as mediators in digital environments. Social media marketing activities create an indirect effect on consumer purchasing intent through their impact on brand awareness and various brand equity elements according to Algharabat et al 2020 and Godey et al 2016. Tourists who engage digitally with destinations and services through online channels, experience better understanding about those places and services, which makes them feel more confident to make their buying decisions according to Barreda et al 2015 and Rather 2021. Research has found brand awareness operates as a mediator between multiple digital marketing dimensions which include entertainment and interaction and advertisement and electronic word of mouth in emerging tourism markets. The study analyzes how digital marketing practices effect on purchase intention among domestic tourists in Myanmar while their impact on brand awareness as a mediating factor.

Hypothesis Development

Digital marketing practices have emerged as critical determinants of consumer behavior in contemporary tourism markets. Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing because it uses multiple dimensions which include entertainment and interaction and trendiness and online advertising and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to create customer perceptions and decision-making processes. Digital marketing dimensions play an essential role in occurring human cognitive and behavioral reactions which involve purchase intention according to research from Dwivedi et al. 2021 and Yadav and Rahman 2018 and Bilgin 2018. The stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework functions as a theoretical base which helps researchers comprehend this relationship. Digital marketing practices serve as external stimuli which affect internal cognitive states through brand awareness (organism) and result in purchase intention (response) (Vieira, 2013; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Digital marketing practices will influence consumer purchase intention through their effect on brand awareness which operates as a mediating factor. Theoretical foundation leads to the development of these following hypotheses.

Entertainment

The entertainment value of digital marketing content shows how well it creates enjoyable emotional experiences for its target audience. Previous research illustrate that entertaining content grow audience involvement meanwhile creating better brand perceptions which result in changed consumer behavior (Godey et al., 2016; Bilgin, 2018; Seo & Park, 2018). The use of destination videos and storytelling in tourism shows visually appealing content which creates interest while helping people build emotional ties to the destinations.

H1: Entertainment positively influences brand awareness
H7: Entertainment positively influences purchase intention.

Interaction

Platforms create interaction through their ability to support businesses and customers in conducting two-way communication. Consumers use interactive engagement to share their thoughts while they build relationships with brands which leads to better trust and brand-related understanding (Hajli, 2015; Kim & Johnson, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2021). The more people interact with content their engagement increases which leads to better results in their behavior.

H2: Interaction positively influences brand awareness.

H8: Interaction positively influences purchase intention

Advertising

Advertising refers to digital promotional activities which require payment to both inform consumers about products and persuade them to make purchases. Digital advertising effectiveness depends on three main factors which include informative and credibility together with personalized advertising content. Digital advertisements in the tourism industry deliver essential information which helps visitors make decisions by decreasing their doubts.

H3: Advertisement positively influences brand awareness.

H9: Advertisement positively influences purchase intention

Electronic Word of Mouth(E-WOM)

Consumers create online product assessments that they distribute through digital channels which constitute electronic word of mouth (eWOM) It ranks as the most trusted digital information source because its users perceive online reviews as highly reliable (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Filieri et al., 2015). eWOM serves as a risk management tool that helps tourists assess products which subsequently affects their buying choices.

H4: eWOM positively influences brand awareness.

H10: eWOM positively influences purchase intention.

Trendiness

Digital marketing content reaches its highest level of trendiness when it provides the most up-to-date and relevant information that fit the tastes of consumers. Trendy content is a key factor in enhancing brand image as it gives the impression of a brand being more valuable with the introduction of new and original ideas (Godey et al. 2016; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Actually, providing the right message at the right moment is especially important in the tourism industry since it can strongly impact the decisions of potential travelers.

H5: Trendiness positively influences brand awareness.

H11: Trendiness positively influences purchase intention.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the capacity of customers to identify and remember a specific brand which functions as a critical factor in their buying choices. The research evidence from Keller 2016 and Foroudi et al. 2018 shows that stronger brand awareness leads to greater consumer trust which in turn increases their willingness to make purchases.

H6: Brand awareness positively influences purchase intention

Mediating Role of Brand Awareness

Brand awareness has been widely recognized as a critical cognitive mechanism through which marketing activities influence consumer behavior. Brand awareness functions as a digital marketing intermediary which links external marketing activities to internal consumer assessments and their resulting behavioral patterns. Brand awareness serves as the primary element of consumer-based brand equity because it measures how much customers can identify and remember a brand which then determines their brand perception and buying behavior (Keller 2016 Foroudi et al 2018).

Brand awareness becomes essential for digital environments because users face constant exposure to

information while they interact with online platforms. Through digital marketing practices which include entertainment, interactive content, trendy elements, online advertisements and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) consumers receive ongoing notifications about brand materials across various channels. Consumers who see the same brand multiple times at different times will develop better brand recognition because they have seen the brand multiple times (Godey et al 2016 Bilgin 2018). Positive brand perception develops when customers learn about a brand because this perception will determine their future buying decisions.

Theoretical studies use the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework to explain how brand awareness functions as a mediator between marketing strategies and customer recognition. Digital marketing activities serve as outside stimuli which create changes in the internal cognitive and emotional states of consumers (organism) which lead to specific behavioral outcomes (response) according to this framework (Vieira 2013 Djafarova & Rushworth 2017). The cognitive processing of marketing stimuli occurs through brand awareness which functions as the organism element in this situation. Digital marketing efforts boost brand awareness which then determines how consumers assess products before they decide to make a purchase.

The mediating function of brand awareness has been established through research studies conducted in digital marketing environments. Studies have shown that marketing activities do not always directly influence purchase intention; instead, their effects are often transmitted through brand-related cognitive constructs. Digital marketing practices increase brand visibility and customer interaction which results in consumers developing trust in the brand and improving their brand perception while they become more willing to purchase (Algharabat et al 2020 Seo & Park 2018). The research conducted in tourism marketing establishment that consumers base their travel choices on brand familiarity when they face travel situations which have high

uncertainty and perceived risk (Barreda et al 2015 Rather 2021).

The tourism industry requires brand awareness to perform its mediating function because tourism products do not exist as physical items. Cognitive cues which include brand recognition and brand familiarity become vital for consumers to use because they cannot test tourism services before they buy them. Brand awareness develops through digital marketing practices which use visually appealing content and interactive content delivery and peer review content to enhance brand presence while enabling customers to make more informed purchasing decisions (Leung et al 2015 Xiang et al 2015). The mechanism through which digital marketing affects tourist purchasing decisions operates through brand awareness.

Digital marketing practices produce different effects on multiple aspects but they impact consumer behavior through brand awareness which acts as their main connecting element. Brand awareness develops through three components which include entertaining content that attracts viewers and interactive elements that boost user participation and eWOM that establishes trustworthiness. The integrated framework needs to include brand awareness as a mediating variable while evaluating all of its digital marketing components.

The research on consumer behavior and digital marketing has expanded yet researchers have studied less about how brand awareness mediates between digital marketing practices and consumer behavior research in Myanmar and other developing tourism markets. The domestic tourist population increasingly depends on online platforms which makes understanding this process crucial for both academic research and practical use. Brand awareness functions as a mediating link which connects digital marketing activities to purchase intention when these activities include entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM. Digital marketing activities

which include eWOM, trendiness, interactive content, advertisement and entertainment lead to consumer behavior changes because they create direct effects and indirect effects which impact domestic tourism in Myanmar.

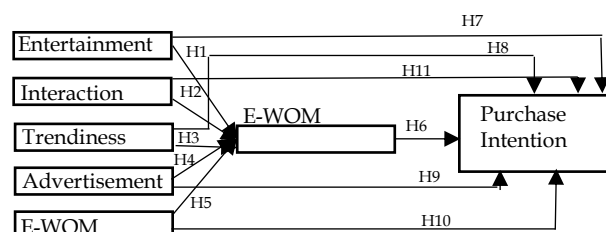
H12: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between entertainment and purchase intention.

H13: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between interaction and purchase intention.

H14: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between advertisement and purchase intention.

H15: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention.

H16: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between trendiness and purchase intention.



Source: Survey Data 2026

Figure 1. Hypothesis

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The researcher used a kind of quantitative research design to look at how digital marketing practices, sort of, influenced purchase intention through brand awareness among Myanmar domestic tourists. A cross-sectional survey design was applied, mainly because the data were gathered from people at just one moment in time, not across different periods. This approach was judged fit for exploring the associations among the variables and also for testing the mediation model that was suggested. In general, quantitative research is very common in marketing and consumer behavior work, because it helps scholars to measure hidden or latent constructs, test the hypotheses and then handle the relationships using statistics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2019). For data collection, the team used a structured

questionnaire, so everyone answered in a standardized way. Then Structural Equation Modeling, or SEM, was used to see the relationships linking digital marketing practices, brand awareness, and purchase intention. SEM was also suitable here because it lets researchers test the measurement model and the structural model, plus the mediating impact of brand awareness (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2015). The analysis itself involved SPSS and AMOS, together, to interpret the results.

Sampling Technique

The respondents targeted in this research were domestic tourists in Myanmar, specifically those who had used digital channels to look up travel info, or to decide about travel matters. Domestic tourists were chosen since they make up a meaningful part of Myanmar's tourism market, and they increasingly rely on digital platforms when they are planning their trips. Data were collected from 300 respondents. This number was kind of seen as enough for SEM because, often, SEM uses a minimum sample of 200 but 300 is usually, sort of, regarded as acceptable for factor analysis and for model checks (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2015). The researcher used a non-probability convenience sampling, because it was more practical to get data from people who fit the study requirements and were reachable through digital platforms, (Etikan et al., 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Locale of the study

The research took place in Myanmar. Myanmar was selected as the research locale because it is an emerging destination where digital platforms are getting more and more important for tourism planning and tourism marketing. With online data collection, the researcher could connect with domestic tourists coming from different parts of the country, which kind of supports wider coverage.

Research Instruments

The main research instrument was a structured questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the major constructs

were measured: digital marketing practices, brand awareness, and purchase intention. Digital marketing practices were operationalized using five dimensions, namely entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The measurement items were adjusted from earlier, validated scales, to help ensure reliability and validity. For digital marketing practices, the items were adapted from work such as Kim and Ko (2012), Yadav and Rahman (2017), Godey et al. (2016), Bilgin (2018), and Seo and Park (2018). For brand awareness, the items were adapted from established branding research, while the purchase intention items were adapted from Dodds et al. (1991) and Chen and Tsai (2007). All items used a five-point Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree. The questionnaire was split into two main sections. The first part gathered demographic data from the respondents. The second part asked respondents to evaluate their perceptions of digital marketing practices, brand awareness, and purchase intention in the setting of domestic tourism.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher collected the data from an online structured questionnaire, which was kind of distributed everywhere via digital platforms, like Facebook and messaging apps, so they could reach respondents who had actually used digital platforms for travel-related things. Before people started answering, they were told about what the study was for, that joining was completely optional, and that their answers would stay confidential, more or less. Participation was strictly on informed consent, respondents were asked to read the consent statement first, then if they agreed they went on to finish the survey. Nobody had to give personal details, and the responses were used only for academic research purposes, not for anything else.

Analysis of the Data/Statistical treatment

The researcher analyzed the collected data with SPSS and AMOS were for scanning the data, descriptive statistics, and reliability checks, while AMOS took care of

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and mediation testing, kind of like the next stage of the work. First, descriptive statistics were used to wrap up the demographic profile of respondents and get a clear feel for how the data seemed overall. Frequencies and percentages were used for categorical demographic variables, whereas means with standard deviations were used for the responses to the measurement items

Second, reliability analysis was done to see how internally consistent the measurement items were. Cronbach's alpha was the main tool used to judge whether items for each construct were reliable. Composite reliability was also evaluated, to back up the alignment of the latent constructs. Third, validity testing was carried out to check whether the measurement items really matched the constructs they were meant to represent. Convergent validity was assessed with factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was examined too, in order to show whether one construct was noticeably different from the other constructs in the model.

Fourth, CFA was conducted in AMOS to test the measurement model. CFA was basically meant to see if the observed items did load, the way they should, onto their related latent variables. The model fit was looked at using a few fit indices like Chi-square / df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI). Then, SEM was used to test the proposed links among digital marketing practices,

brand awareness, and purchase intention. The study looked at direct effects of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM on both brand awareness and purchase intention. The impact of brand awareness on purchase intention was also tested.

Lastly, mediation analysis was carried out to see whether brand awareness worked as a mediator between digital marketing practices and purchase intention. The researcher used bootstrapping to examine whether the indirect effects were significant. Bootstrapping was a good choice, because it gives a sturdier test for mediation, since it estimates the indirect effects and their confidence intervals.

Ethical Considerations

In the whole stretch of the data collection phase, the researches stayed within ethical principles basically the question push anything. Before respondents started, they were told kind of what the study was about. Participation was voluntary, so people could stop filling out the survey whenever they wanted, no pressure. The informed consent, was gathered electronically, right before the questionnaire began. The researcher protected respondent privacy and confidentiality. No names or identification numbers, no phone numbers, and no other personally identifying details were collected at all. The data were used only for academic purposes, and were stored securely. If ethical approval had been granted by an institution or ethics committee, then the approval information needs to be described here too, including the institution name, and approval number.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study explores how digital marketing influences consumer buying behavior by studying domestic Myanmar tourists who use brand recognition as their connecting factor. The analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS, which included descriptive statistics

and required reliability and validity tests and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) testing. The results present all analysis stages in a systematic format which enhances both clarity and strength of the findings

Preliminary Data Analysis**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Normality

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Items (All constructs)	2.60-3.30	0.61-0.92	-0.30 to 0.33	-0.45 to 0.50

Source: Survey Data 2026

The descriptive statistics show how study participants perceived the different study variables. The mean values for all items range from 2.60 to 3.30, which shows that participants mostly agreed about digital marketing practices and brand awareness and purchase intention statements. The respondents present a middle assessment of digital marketing content because their digital marketing perception falls between extreme high and low levels. The standard deviation values demonstrate a range between 0.64 and 0.92, which shows that participants demonstrated moderate response variability. The study results show that participants maintained similar opinions, yet the data still provided enough variation to conduct effective statistical testing. The normality assessment proves the data meets the requirements needed for SEM analysis. The skewness values fall within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, while kurtosis values remain within -7 to +7. The data distribution shows normal characteristics, which fulfills the necessary conditions for conducting parametric tests and structural equation modeling.

Measurement Model Evaluation**Reliability Analysis****Table 2.** Reliability Results

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Entertainment	7	0.939
Interaction	7	0.936
Trendiness	7	0.933
Advertisement	7	0.934
eWOM	7	0.925
Brand Awareness	7	0.939
Purchase Intention	7	0.935

Source: Survey Data 2026

The reliability analysis evaluates the internal consistency of the measurement scales using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrate alpha values exceeding 0.90

which demonstrates their excellent internal consistency. The items of each construct show high correlation because they measure the same underlying concept. The alpha values remain below 0.95 because this level would suggest that some items show redundancy. The results demonstrate that the measurement scales function as reliable instruments which efficiently measure different aspects without repeating the same content. All constructs demonstrate high reliability which strengthens the measurement model and provides stable data for future CFA and SEM analyses

Multicollinearity Assessment**Table 3.** Multicollinearity among Digital Marketing Practice Dimensions

Construct	Tolerance	VIF
Entertainment	0.991	1.009
Interaction	0.989	1.011
Trendiness	0.994	1.006
Advertisement	0.996	1.004
eWOM	0.997	1.003

Source: Survey Data 2026

The research evaluated multicollinearity to confirm that the independent variables do not demonstrate significant correlation with each other. The measurement results show that all constructs have tolerance values which are near 1 while their VIF values stay at approximately 1, thus proving that no multicollinearity exists between the constructs. The study demonstrates that each independent variable adds distinct data to the model, which results in only minor overlaps with other variables. The analysis of structural equation modeling (SEM) requires this knowledge because multicollinearity introduces errors into parameter estimation while it decreases the accuracy of hypothesis testing. The absence of multicollinearity confirms that the model structure is appropriate and that the relationships between variables can be interpreted with confidence.

Table 4. Convergent Validity of Digital Marketing Practices, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention

Construct	CR	AVE
Entertainment	0.941	0.694
Interaction	0.937	0.680
Trendiness	0.935	0.672
Advertisement	0.934	0.670
eWOM	0.925	0.639
Brand Awareness	0.940	0.691
Purchase Intention	0.935	0.674

Source: Survey Data 2026

The research conducted confirmatory factor analysis to assess the measurement model's validity through convergent testing. The composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 which shows that the internal reliability of the constructs exceeds the measurement limits of Cronbach's alpha. The average variance extracted (AVE) values demonstrate that all constructs achieve more than 50

percent explanatory power over their respective indicators. The observed variables show strong connections to their associated latent constructs. The results establish convergent validity while showing that the measurement model functions properly according to its specifications. The constructs effectively capture the theoretical concepts of digital marketing practices brand awareness and purchase intention.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity among the Study Constructs

Construct	Brand Awareness	Entertainment	Interaction	Advertising	EWOM	Trendiness	Purchase Intention
Brand Awareness	1	0.311	0.384	0.220	0.493	0.270	0.723
Entertainment	0.311	1					
Interaction	0.384		1				
Advertising	0.220			1			
EWOM	0.493				1		
Trendiness	0.270					1	
Purchase Intention	0.723						1

Source: Survey Data 2026

The research assessed discriminant validity through the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The study shows that all inter-construct correlations fall below the square root of AVE values, which proves that each construct exists as a separate empirical entity. The relationships between brand awareness and purchase intention show strong correlation strength yet remain within acceptable limits which prevents any conceptual overlap from occurring.

The evidence indicates that consumer behavior develops through two distinct yet interconnected paths which researchers have identified as separate constructs. The research demonstrates that the measurement model operates without redundancy problems or multicollinearity issues, which validates the study's measurement constructs.

Model Fit Evaluation

Table 6. Model Fit Indices for the Measurement and Structural Model

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
CMIN/DF	1.010	<3	Good
CFI	0.999	>0.90	Excellent
TLI	0.999	>0.90	Excellent
RMSEA	0.006	<0.08	Excellent
GFI	0.874	>0.90	Acceptable

Source: Survey Data 2026

The model fit indices demonstrate that the proposed model fits the data exceptionally well. The CMIN/DF value shows that the model has a strong connection to the actual observed data. The CFI and TLI values are close to 1, reflecting excellent comparative fit. The RMSEA value is significantly below the threshold, indicating a close fit

between the model and the population covariance matrix. The GFI value reaches the acceptable range because it sits just below the ideal threshold but other indices maintain their strength. The results demonstrate that the model is correctly specified and functions as a valid tool for testing hypotheses.

Findings Based on the Objectives of the Study

Objective 1: To find out how entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM affect brand awareness for Myanmar domestic tourists

Table 7. Effects of Digital Marketing Practices on Brand Awareness

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
Path	β	p-value	Result
Entertainment → Brand Awareness	0.371	0.000	Supported
Interaction → Brand Awareness	0.412	0.000	Supported
Trendiness → Brand Awareness	0.282	0.000	Supported
Advertisement → Brand Awareness	0.295	0.000	Supported
eWOM → Brand Awareness	0.515	0.000	Supported

Source: Survey Data 2026

Objective 2: To assess the direct impact of entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM on purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists.

Table 8. Direct Effects of Digital Marketing Practices on Purchase Intention

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
Path	β	p-value	Result
Entertainment → Purchase Intention	-0.049	0.312	Not Supported
Interaction → Purchase Intention	-0.022	0.487	Not Supported
Trendiness → Purchase Intention	0.046	0.298	Not Supported
Advertisement → Purchase Intention	0.005	0.912	Not Supported
eWOM → Purchase Intention	0.403	0.000	Supported

Source: Survey Data 2026

Objective 3: To study the influence of brand awareness on purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists

Table 9. Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
Path	β	p-value	Result
Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.569	0.000	Supported

Source: Survey Data 2026

Objective 3: To study the influence of brand awareness on purchase intention among Myanmar domestic tourists

Table 10. Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
Path	β	p-value	Result
Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.569	0.000	Supported

Source: Survey Data 2026

Objective 4: To examine how brand awareness acts as a mediator in the link between each digital marketing practice and purchase intention

Table 11. Mediating Effect of Brand Awareness between Digital Marketing Practices and Purchase Intention

Index	Value	Recommended	Result
Path	β	p-value	Result
V	-0.049	0.211	0.162
Interaction → Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	-0.022	0.234	0.213
Trendiness → Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.046	0.161	0.206
Advertisement → Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.005	0.168	0.173
eWOM → Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.403	0.293	0.697

Source: Survey Data 2026

Objective 5: To understand which digital marketing practice has the strongest pull-on brand awareness and purchase intention in the Myanmar domestic tourism setting, overall

Table 12. Ranking of Digital Marketing Practices Based on Their Effects

Digital Marketing Practice	Effect on Brand Awareness	Direct Effect on Purchase Intention	Total Effect through Brand Awareness
eWOM	0.515	0.403	0.697
Interaction	0.412	-0.022	0.213
Entertainment	0.371	-0.049	0.162
Advertisement	0.295	0.005	0.173
Trendiness	0.282	0.046	0.206

Source: Survey Data 2026

The structural model results show that digital marketing practices lead to brand awareness improvements through eWOM which serves as the most effective element in this process. This shows that consumer-generated content results in significant impact on brand perception development. The majority of digital marketing practices do not have any direct effect on purchase intention. Consumers require time to process

marketing exposure before they make behavioral decisions because they need to understand the information through cognitive processing. Brand awareness functions as an essential middle factor which intermediate product delivery to customers. This demonstrates that organizations must establish strong brand recognition before they can anticipate changes in consumer behavior.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 13. R² Values

Variable	R ²
Brand Awareness	0.712
Purchase Intention	0.720

Source: Survey Data 2026

The R² values demonstrate that the model provides complete explanation of the data. Digital marketing practices explain a substantial portion of variance in brand awareness, while brand awareness and digital

marketing practices together explain a high proportion of purchase intention. The model successfully identifies the main factors that drive consumer behavior in the tourism industry.

*Mediation Analysis***Table 14.** Mediation Results

Path	Direct	Indirect	Total	P-value	Type Effect
Entertainment to Brand Awareness to Purchase Intention	-0.049	0.211	0.162	0.000	Full
Interaction to Brand Awareness to Purchase Intention	-0.022	0.234	0.213	0.000	Full
Trendiness to Brand Awareness to Purchase Intention	0.046	0.161	0.206	0.000	Full
Advertisement to Brand Awareness to Purchase Intention	0.005	0.168	0.173	0.000	Full
EWOM to Brand Awareness to Purchase Intention	0.403	0.293	0.697	0.000	Partial

Source: Survey Data 2026

The mediation analysis results show that brand awareness functions as the essential link which connects digital marketing activities to purchase intention effects. The majority of constructs demonstrate full mediation because they operate indirect through brand awareness. eWOM demonstrates partial mediation because it functions as a direct and indirect force which affects outcomes. The study demonstrates how user-generated content creates powerful influence to control consumer choice.

Discussion

This research analysed at how digital marketing practices affected purchase intention, but only through brand awareness, among Myanmar domestic tourists. Overall, the results kind of suggested that entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and eWOM really did boost brand awareness in a pretty noticeable way. Among those bits, eWOM seemed to have the most impact so it looks like tourists were more influenced by reviews, word of mouth guidance, and shared travel stories than by the usual promotional messages, and honestly that feels pretty consistent. This kind of result is sort of inline with earlier study, where people say that digital interaction and content, produced by customers, actually matters a lot, for the way consumers end up responding in tourism marketing contexts (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Bilgin, 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Also, the findings showed that most digital marketing dimensions were not really tied straight to purchase intention, except for eWOM. So it implies that just observing digital marketing, or just being exposed to it maybe doesn't turn fast into an actual buying decision.

Instead tourists likely need to first notice the tourism brand, then hold it in memory, and slowly get comfortable with it. This fits the Stimulus-Organism-Response view, because digital marketing practices work like external stimuli, brand awareness works as the internal mental process, and purchase intention becomes the final behavioral outcome. The same point is in line with studies arguing that brand-related impressions, can work as a bridge between digital marketing activity and consumer behavioral intention (Kim & Ko, 2012; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

The mediating role of brand awareness also brings a pretty practical message for tourism marketers. Entertainment, interaction, trendiness, and advertisement, may become more effective once they first create brand awareness. But eWOM is a bit different, it shows both direct and indirect effects, meaning consumer-generated information tends to be especially persuasive when tourists are deciding. So, Myanmar tourism businesses should not only upload appealing digital content. They also need to build tourism brands that are easy to recognize, trustworthy, and memorable, that part matters.

CONCLUSION

The findings suggests that digital marketing nudges purchase intention mostly via brand awareness, rather than only doing a direct push. Tourists don't just react to the digital marketing messages automatically; instead, they take them in cognitively first, and only then they end up forming purchase intention. This research adds to the digital marketing literature by basically pointing out that brand awareness works as the main pathway linking

digital marketing practices and purchase intention in Myanmar's domestic tourism setting. It also confirms the solid role of eWOM as the strongest and most influential digital marketing dimension. So overall, this research extends how the S-O-R framework is used in an emerging tourism market, and it provides some evidence that digital marketing becomes the most effective when it helps tourists build awareness plus confidence toward tourism brands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tourism marketers should probably put brand awareness at the top, like a big aim for digital marketing strategies. They should craft messages that stay consistent, feel memorable, and sound believable across the digital channels they use. Since eWOM had the strongest effect, tourism firms should really push for visitors who are satisfied to share reviews, travel photos, ratings, and recommendations as well, sort of like make it easy for them to talk about it. Also, marketers should respond in an engaged way to customer feedback, so trust grows, and people keep interacting.

For future researchers, it would be better to use probability sampling along with longitudinal designs, so the results can be more general, and we can actually see how tourist behavior shifts across time. Future work might also bring in other factors such as brand trust, perceived value, destination image satisfaction, and brand loyalty. That way, we can get a richer, more complete picture of how effective digital marketing is in tourism.

AI DECLARATION

The researchers acknowledge that Claude and Grammarly were involved when preparing this manuscript, but only for English language improvement. These tools were added just to assist with grammar corrections, better sentence clarity, an academic tone, punctuation, spelling, and overall readability also, basically. Their use was kept to refining the quality of the

written expression, and it did not replace the researchers' own intellectual contribution to the study.

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