



Beyond Adoption: Understanding the Consumer Impact of Digital Marketing in Emerging Economies Through a Systematic Review

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Abstrak: Adopsi pemasaran digital berkembang pesat di berbagai negara berkembang (*emerging economies*), menciptakan peluang baru bagi perusahaan untuk memengaruhi perilaku konsumen. Namun, bukti empiris mengenai dampaknya terhadap hasil konsumen jangka panjang masih terfragmentasi dan menunjukkan inkonsistensi teoretis. Penelitian ini bertujuan mensintesis literatur yang ada mengenai adopsi pemasaran digital dan perilaku konsumen di negara berkembang serta mengidentifikasi mekanisme yang memengaruhi konversi keterlibatan digital menjadi nilai konsumen yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian dilakukan menggunakan *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) berdasarkan pedoman PRISMA 2020 dengan sampel akhir sebanyak 47 studi substantif yang dipublikasikan selama periode 2015–2025. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa adopsi pemasaran digital dipengaruhi oleh faktor teknologi, sosial, dan institusional, termasuk persepsi kegunaan, pengaruh sosial, kepercayaan, literasi digital, dan kesiapan infrastruktur. Meskipun pemasaran digital secara konsisten meningkatkan keterlibatan konsumen dan niat pembelian, pengaruhnya terhadap loyalitas, advokasi, dan komitmen jangka panjang masih bervariasi antar konteks. Studi ini mengidentifikasi adanya *conversion gap* antara keterlibatan konsumen dan hasil konsumen yang berkelanjutan, yang menunjukkan keterbatasan teori berbasis adopsi seperti *Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM) dan *Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology* (UTAUT). Untuk mengatasi kesenjangan tersebut, penelitian ini mengusulkan *Institutional Conversion Framework* yang mengintegrasikan dimensi teknologi, relasional, dan institusional dalam menjelaskan perilaku konsumen pasca-adopsi. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori serta memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pemasar digital, penyedia platform, dan pembuat kebijakan di negara berkembang.

Kata kunci: Adopsi Pemasaran Digital; Perilaku Konsumen; Negara Berkembang; *Conversion Gap*; *Institutional Conversion Framework*.

Abstract: Digital marketing adoption has expanded rapidly across emerging economies, creating new opportunities for firms to influence consumer behavior. However, evidence regarding its impact on long-term consumer outcomes remains fragmented and theoretically inconsistent. This study aims to synthesize the existing literature on digital marketing adoption and consumer behavior in emerging economies while identifying key mechanisms that shape the conversion of digital engagement into sustainable consumer value. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, resulting in a final sample of 47 substantive studies published between 2015 and 2025. The findings indicate that digital marketing adoption is driven by technological, social, and institutional factors, including perceived usefulness, social influence, trust, digital literacy, and infrastructural readiness. While digital marketing consistently enhances consumer engagement and purchase intention, its effects on loyalty, advocacy, and long-term commitment remain inconsistent across contexts. This review identifies a persistent conversion gap between consumer engagement and sustainable consumer outcomes, highlighting limitations in adoption-centric theories such as TAM and UTAUT. To address this gap, the study proposes an *Institutional Conversion Framework* that integrates technological, relational, and institutional dimensions to explain post-adoption consumer behavior. The study

contributes to theory development and offers practical insights for digital marketers, platform providers, and policymakers in emerging economies.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing Adoption; Consumer Behavior; Emerging Economies; Conversion Gap; Institutional Conversion Framework.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped marketing practices worldwide. Over the past decade, firms have increasingly adopted digital marketing tools—including social media platforms, search engine optimization, mobile marketing, and data-driven analytics—to enhance customer engagement and optimize market performance ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#)). The acceleration of digital transformation, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, has intensified reliance on digital channels as primary interfaces between firms and consumers ([Roreng et al., 2024](#); [Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019](#)). Consequently, digital marketing adoption is no longer optional but constitutes a strategic imperative for firms seeking competitiveness in dynamic environments ([HALIK et al., 2023](#)).

Emerging economies represent a particularly compelling context for examining digital marketing adoption. These markets are characterized by rapid digital penetration, youthful demographics, expanding middle classes, and institutional transitions that differentiate them from developed economies ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#)). However, structural challenges—including digital infrastructure disparities, regulatory constraints, income inequality, and cultural heterogeneity—may moderate how digital marketing initiatives influence consumer behavior ([J. P. Londong, 2024](#)). Despite accelerated digital diffusion, the mechanisms through which digital marketing adoption shapes consumer outcomes in emerging markets remain theoretically fragmented and empirically inconsistent.

Recent empirical studies suggest that digital marketing adoption influences various consumer-related outcomes, including purchase intention, brand loyalty, customer engagement, perceived value, and trust ([Alalwan, 2018](#); [Hidayat et al., 2021](#); [Sahetapy et al., 2025](#); [Sharabati et al., 2024](#)). Nevertheless, findings often vary across contexts. For instance, while some studies emphasize the dominant role of perceived usefulness and interactivity in driving online engagement ([Cho & Jeon, 2023](#);

[Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Roreng & Halik, 2025](#)), others highlight the importance of cultural values, social influence, open innovation, or institutional trust in shaping digital responsiveness ([J. B. Halik & Halik, 2024](#)). This inconsistency raises a fundamental question: Are existing theoretical frameworks—such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)—sufficient to explain consumer responses to digital marketing in emerging economies, or do contextual contingencies demand theoretical refinement?

In addition, prior literature reviews have primarily focused on digital marketing tools in isolation (e.g., social media marketing, mobile advertising) or examined digital transformation at the firm level without systematically synthesizing consumer-level consequences in emerging markets ([Aswani et al., 2018](#); [De Canio et al., 2021](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)). The absence of a comprehensive and critically integrative review leaves several unresolved issues: (1) Which determinants most strongly drive digital marketing adoption in emerging contexts? (2) How do these determinants translate into measurable consumer outcomes? (3) What theoretical and methodological gaps persist in the literature?

More importantly, existing theoretical frameworks remain largely adoption-centric. Models such as TAM, UTAUT, and TPB have been extensively employed to explain technology acceptance and usage intentions, yet they provide limited insight into how consumer engagement evolves into long-term outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and relationship commitment. As a result, the literature offers an incomplete explanation of post-adoption consumer behavior in emerging economies, where institutional conditions, digital literacy, and governance structures may significantly influence conversion processes. This theoretical limitation highlights the need for a more integrative perspective capable of linking technology adoption, consumer engagement, and sustainable consumer value.

To illustrate the magnitude and relevance of the phenomenon, recent data demonstrate the accelerating digital landscape in emerging economies.

Table 1. Indicators of Digital Growth in Emerging Economies (2019–2024)

Indicator	Evidence	Implication for Research
Internet penetration in emerging markets	Exceeded 60% on average by 2023 (International Telecommunication Union, 2023)	Expanding digital consumer base
Mobile broadband subscriptions	Significant growth across Asia, Middle East, and Africa (GSMA, 2024)	Mobile-first marketing strategies dominate
Social media usage growth	Over 9% annual growth in emerging regions (UNDP, 2024)	Increased reliance on social commerce
E-commerce expansion	Double-digit growth rates in Southeast Asia and MENA regions (International Telecommunication Union, 2023)	Rising importance of digital customer journeys

These indicators underscore that emerging economies are not peripheral digital markets but central arenas of transformation. However, rapid growth does not necessarily imply uniform consumer responsiveness. Variations in institutional maturity, digital literacy, and socio-cultural norms may significantly shape how consumers interpret and react to digital marketing efforts.

Despite the rapid adoption of digital marketing technologies across emerging economies, evidence regarding their long-term impact on consumer outcomes remains fragmented. While many studies report positive effects on consumer engagement, interaction, and purchase intention, these outcomes do not consistently translate into sustained loyalty, advocacy, or long-term customer relationships. This phenomenon suggests the existence of a conversion gap between initial digital engagement and enduring consumer commitment. Existing literature has largely focused on adoption and usage intentions, leaving limited understanding of how and under what conditions engagement is

converted into long-term consumer value in emerging economy contexts.

Even with the rapid growth of digital platforms in developing economies, there is a deficiency in the literature regarding a critically synthesized comprehension of how the adoption of digital marketing affects consumers in these settings. Current research is scattered across various theories, methods, and locations, hindering the advancement of cumulative knowledge. In the absence of systematic integration and critical assessment, scholars and practitioners may depend on generalized models from developed markets that might not sufficiently clarify consumer behavior in diverse structural contexts. Consequently, a systematic review and thorough synthesis are essential to unify theoretical viewpoints, outline empirical results, pinpoint discrepancies, and suggest a cohesive research plan suited for emerging economies.

Accordingly, this review argues that the primary theoretical challenge is not technology adoption itself, but the conversion of engagement into sustainable consumer outcomes. By synthesizing evidence from emerging economies, this study develops the concept of a conversion gap and proposes an institutional perspective for understanding why digital marketing effectiveness varies across contexts.

Research Problem Formulation

Based on the identified gaps, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What theoretical frameworks have been employed to explain digital marketing adoption and consumer behavior in emerging economies?
2. What key technological, social, and institutional factors drive digital marketing adoption in emerging economies?
3. How do trust and consumer engagement shape post-adoption outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and purchase intention?
4. What evidence supports the existence of a conversion gap between digital engagement and long-term consumer outcomes in emerging economies?
5. What theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps remain in the literature, and how can future research advance knowledge in this domain?

METHODS

Search Strategy and Study Selection

The initial review process identified 54 references relevant to the study objectives. After classification, 47 studies were retained as substantive sources for thematic synthesis, while 5 methodological references and 2 international reports were used to support the review protocol and contextual interpretation. The substantive evidence base was dominated by Scopus-indexed publications ($n = 38$), supplemented by a limited number of additional studies that provided contextual insights into emerging economy settings.

A structured search strategy using Boolean operators was employed to capture relevant studies. The search string combined terms related to digital marketing adoption, consumer behavior, and emerging economy contexts. The primary search query was formulated as follows:

("digital marketing adoption" OR "digital marketing" OR "social media marketing" OR "online marketing" OR "digital advertising" OR "mobile marketing" OR "influencer marketing") AND ("consumer behavior" OR "purchase intention" OR "customer engagement" OR "brand loyalty" OR "consumer trust" OR "customer satisfaction") AND ("emerging economies" OR "developing countries" OR "emerging markets" OR "Southeast Asia" OR "South Asia" OR "Middle East" OR "Africa" OR "Latin America")

The search was limited to journal articles published in English between 2015 and 2025. This period was selected to capture recent developments associated with accelerated digital transformation, increasing social media penetration, and post-pandemic shifts in consumer behavior.

The study selection process followed four sequential stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. Initially, all records retrieved from the databases were exported and screened for duplicate entries. After duplicate removal, titles and abstracts were evaluated to determine their relevance to the review objectives. Studies were retained for full-text assessment when they addressed digital marketing adoption, consumer-level outcomes, and emerging economy contexts.

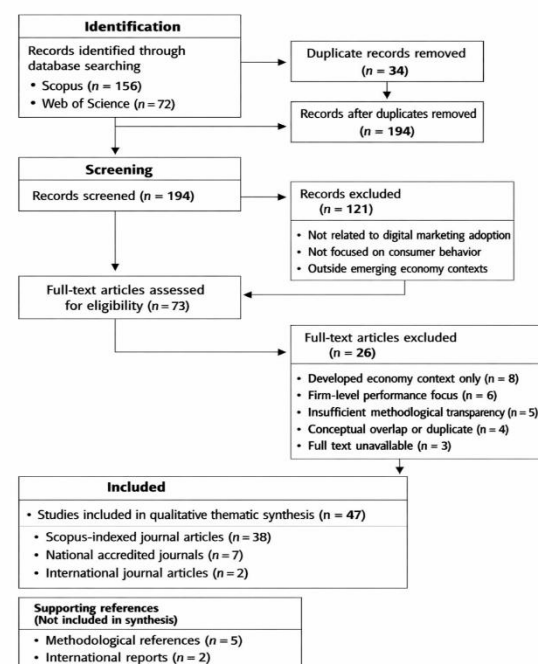
To enhance methodological rigor, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Studies were included if they: (1) examined

digital marketing adoption or digital marketing practices; (2) investigated consumer-related outcomes such as engagement, trust, purchase intention, loyalty, satisfaction, or advocacy; (3) focused on emerging economies or developing market contexts; and (4) were published in peer-reviewed academic journals. Studies were excluded if they: (1) focused exclusively on firm-level performance without examining consumer outcomes; (2) investigated developed economies only; (3) lacked sufficient methodological transparency; (4) were conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, dissertations, or non-peer-reviewed publications; or (5) were unavailable in full-text format.

A total of 54 references were ultimately retained for this review, comprising 47 substantive studies, 5 methodological references, and 2 international reports. The substantive studies constituted the primary unit of analysis, while methodological and institutional sources were used to support the review protocol and contextual interpretation.

The overall study selection process is presented in **Figure 1** through a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram, ensuring transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor throughout the review process.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process



Source: Authors' systematic review process adapted from PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021).

Final Sample Characteristics

The final qualitative synthesis consisted of 47 substantive studies directly examining digital marketing adoption and consumer-related outcomes in emerging economies. These studies comprised 38 Scopus-indexed journal articles, 7 nationally accredited journal articles, and 2 international journal publications. In addition, 5 methodological references and 2 international institutional reports were utilized to support the review protocol, theoretical development, and contextual analysis but were not included as substantive units of synthesis. The final sample provided a robust evidence base for identifying theoretical patterns, contextual contingencies, and consumer-level outcomes associated with digital marketing adoption across emerging economies.

Table 1. Composition of the Final Sample

Source Type	Number of Studies
Scopus-indexed journals	38
National accredited journals	7
International journals	2
Total substantive studies	47
Methodological references	5
International reports	2
Total references cited	54

Data Analysis and Thematic Synthesis

For data analysis, this study applies a thematic and content-based synthesis approach, complemented by descriptive publication analysis. Thematic synthesis enables the identification of recurring patterns, theoretical frameworks, determinants, mediating or moderating variables, and consumer outcomes across studies ([Naeem et al., 2023](#); [Snyder, 2019](#)). Articles were coded systematically according to key dimensions, including theoretical foundation, research design, geographic context, measurement constructs, and main findings. The coding process was conducted iteratively by the authors. Initial codes were generated from the research objectives and refined through repeated examination of the included studies. Similar concepts were subsequently grouped into broader themes, including adoption drivers, trust and engagement mechanisms, consumer outcomes, and contextual contingencies. Discrepancies in coding interpretation were resolved through discussion and consensus among the authors to enhance analytical consistency.

Cross-study comparison was conducted to detect convergences, divergences, and underexplored areas. In addition, a critical synthesis approach was employed to evaluate the robustness of theoretical applications—such as TAM, UTAUT, TPB, and relationship marketing theory—and to assess whether these frameworks adequately capture contextual specificities in emerging economies.

Descriptive statistics were used to present publication trends, regional distribution, and methodological patterns, while interpretive analysis was conducted to develop an integrative framework linking determinants of digital marketing adoption with consumer-level outcomes. This dual analytical strategy strengthens both the descriptive and explanatory contributions of the review. By combining systematic screening procedures with critical thematic synthesis, the study ensures methodological rigor, conceptual clarity, and theoretical advancement in understanding the consumer impact of digital marketing adoption in emerging economies.

Quality Assessment

To ensure the credibility and relevance of the included studies, a quality appraisal procedure was conducted during the eligibility stage. Each study was assessed based on four criteria: (1) clarity of research objectives, (2) methodological transparency, (3) appropriateness of data analysis techniques, and (4) relevance to the review objectives. Studies that lacked sufficient methodological information or demonstrated limited relevance to digital marketing adoption and consumer outcomes in emerging economies were excluded during the screening process. The quality assessment was not intended to rank studies but to ensure that only methodologically sound and relevant evidence was included in the final synthesis.

RESULTS

Overview of the Selected Studies

The systematic search and screening process resulted in a final sample of 47 substantive studies, predominantly drawn from Scopus-indexed journals ($n = 38$), which formed the basis of the qualitative synthesis. The selected studies were published between 2015 and 2025, reflecting the contemporary phase of accelerated digital transformation in emerging economies. A temporal analysis indicates a noticeable increase

in publications after 2020, coinciding with the pandemic-induced shift toward digital platforms and contactless consumption. This surge confirms that digital marketing adoption in emerging markets has become a central research theme rather than a peripheral inquiry.

Geographically, the literature is concentrated in Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and selected African economies. However, cross-regional comparative studies remain limited. Most empirical contributions rely on quantitative survey designs using structural equation modeling (SEM), particularly PLS-SEM, to test relationships between digital marketing constructs and consumer behavioral outcomes. Experimental and longitudinal designs are underrepresented, suggesting a methodological concentration that may restrict causal inference and dynamic understanding.

Thematically, the reviewed studies cluster around three broad domains:

- 1) determinants of digital marketing adoption,
- 2) mediating and moderating mechanisms, and
- 3) consumer-related outcomes.

These domains form the analytical structure of this section.

Adoption Drivers of Digital Marketing in Emerging Economies

The reviewed literature consistently indicates that digital marketing adoption in emerging economies is influenced by a combination of technological, social, and contextual factors. While traditional technology acceptance frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) remain relevant, the evidence suggests that adoption decisions are shaped by broader environmental conditions that extend beyond perceptions of technology usefulness and ease of use.

Across the reviewed studies, perceived usefulness emerged as one of the most frequently reported determinants of digital marketing adoption ([J. Halik et al., 2021](#); [J. B. Halik et al., 2026](#); [Su et al., 2023](#)). Consumers are more likely to engage with digital marketing platforms when they perceive clear benefits, such as greater convenience, faster access to information, personalized recommendations, and improved purchasing efficiency. Similarly, perceived ease of use facilitates adoption by reducing the cognitive effort required to navigate digital

platforms, particularly among consumers with limited technological experience ([Sarker et al., 2025](#); [Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019](#)).

Social influence also plays a significant role in shaping adoption behavior within emerging economies. In many collectivist societies, consumers rely heavily on recommendations from family members, peers, online communities, and social media influencers when evaluating digital products and services. Consequently, social validation often accelerates the acceptance of digital marketing channels and reinforces consumer willingness to interact with branded content ([Cho & Jeon, 2023](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2021](#)).

Beyond these traditional adoption drivers, the review highlights the increasing importance of trust-related factors ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#)). Several studies report that consumers' willingness to engage with digital marketing activities depends heavily on their confidence in online transactions, data security, platform credibility, and information reliability ([Alalwan, 2018](#); [Dash et al., 2025](#)). This finding is particularly pronounced in emerging economies, where institutional protections, regulatory enforcement, and consumer safeguards may vary considerably across countries. As a result, trust functions not merely as a supporting factor but as a critical prerequisite for digital engagement.

The findings further reveal that digital infrastructure and technological readiness substantially influence adoption outcomes. Access to reliable internet connectivity, smartphone penetration, digital payment systems, and platform accessibility determine the extent to which consumers can participate in digital marketplaces ([Mergel et al., 2019](#); [Pingali et al., 2023](#)). Studies conducted in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and several African markets consistently demonstrate that infrastructure constraints may limit adoption even when consumer attitudes toward digital marketing are generally positive ([Pingali et al., 2023](#); [Purandare, 2024](#)).

A comparative analysis of the reviewed literature suggests that adoption drivers are not uniformly distributed across contexts. In relatively mature digital environments, such as parts of Southeast Asia, perceived usefulness and personalization tend to dominate consumer adoption decisions. In contrast, studies conducted in less mature digital ecosystems frequently identify trust, infrastructure quality, and digital

literacy as more influential determinants. These variations indicate that consumer adoption of digital marketing is conditioned by contextual factors that extend beyond the explanatory scope of conventional adoption theories.

Overall, the evidence suggests that digital marketing adoption in emerging economies results from the interaction between technological perceptions, social influences, trust mechanisms, and institutional conditions. While existing theories successfully explain why consumers initially adopt digital platforms, the reviewed studies indicate that adoption alone does not guarantee meaningful consumer outcomes. This observation provides the foundation for the subsequent discussion on the conversion gap between digital engagement and long-term consumer loyalty.

Trust, Consumer Engagement, and Post-Adoption Outcomes

Beyond initial adoption, the literature increasingly emphasizes the importance of trust and consumer engagement as critical mechanisms through which digital marketing influences consumer behavior. While adoption-related factors explain consumers' willingness to interact with digital platforms, post-adoption outcomes depend largely on the quality of the relationship established between consumers and digital marketing ecosystems ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#)).

Trust emerged as one of the most frequently cited determinants of successful post-adoption outcomes across the reviewed studies. In digital environments characterized by information asymmetry, perceived risk, and limited physical interaction, consumers often rely on trust as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Hidayat et al., 2021](#)). Trust may be directed toward multiple entities, including brands, digital platforms, online vendors, influencers, and payment systems. Consequently, trust serves as a foundational element that shapes consumers' willingness to engage with digital marketing content and maintain long-term relationships with firms ([Lou & Yuan, 2019](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#)).

The review further reveals that consumer engagement functions as a key intermediary between digital marketing initiatives and behavioral outcomes. Interactive content, personalized recommendations, social media communication, influencer marketing, and

gamification strategies have been shown to stimulate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement ([Clement Addo et al., 2021](#); [De Canio et al., 2021](#); [Voorveld et al., 2018](#)). Engaged consumers are generally more likely to interact with brands, share content, participate in online communities, and develop favorable attitudes toward products and services ([Hollebeek, 2019](#); [Winell et al., 2023](#)).

However, the relationship between trust, engagement, and consumer outcomes is not always straightforward. While many studies report positive associations between engagement and purchase intention, evidence regarding long-term outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and repurchase behavior remains less consistent ([Dash et al., 2025](#); [Khan et al., 2024](#)). Several studies indicate that consumers may actively engage with digital content without developing enduring commitments to a particular brand. This phenomenon is especially evident in highly competitive digital marketplaces where consumers can easily switch between platforms, brands, and sellers at relatively low cost ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Dash et al., 2025](#)).

Comparative evidence across emerging economies further demonstrates that the effectiveness of trust and engagement mechanisms is highly context-dependent. In markets with relatively mature digital ecosystems, consumer engagement often translates more effectively into satisfaction and loyalty due to stronger institutional support, reliable payment infrastructures, and higher levels of digital confidence ([Pingali et al., 2023](#); [Bao et al., 2025](#)). Conversely, in environments characterized by regulatory uncertainty, limited consumer protection, or low digital literacy, engagement may generate short-term interactions without producing sustainable relational outcomes ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#); [Djimesah et al., 2026](#)).

Another recurring finding concerns the growing role of personalized digital experiences. Artificial intelligence-driven recommendations, targeted advertising, and customized content have been shown to enhance engagement and perceived relevance ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [McKee et al., 2025](#)). Nevertheless, excessive personalization may also trigger privacy concerns, perceptions of surveillance, and resistance behaviors, potentially weakening consumer trust ([McKee et al., 2025](#); [Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#)). This suggests

that the effectiveness of personalization depends on consumers' perceptions of transparency, fairness, and data governance practices.

The synthesis of the reviewed literature therefore indicates that trust and engagement constitute necessary but insufficient conditions for achieving long-term consumer outcomes. Although digital marketing strategies are increasingly successful in generating interaction and participation, these mechanisms do not automatically lead to loyalty or sustained consumer commitment ([Dash et al., 2025](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#)). The inconsistency observed across studies suggests the presence of additional contextual and institutional factors that influence whether engagement can be successfully converted into enduring consumer value. This observation forms the basis for the concept of the conversion gap, which is discussed in the following section.

The Conversion Gap in Emerging Economies

One of the most significant insights emerging from this review is the identification of a persistent conversion gap between digital marketing engagement and long-term consumer outcomes in emerging economies. While the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates positive effects of digital marketing on consumer attention, interaction, engagement, and purchase intention, the evidence becomes considerably less consistent when examining outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, retention, and sustained relationship commitment ([Clement Addo et al., 2021](#); [Dash et al., 2025](#); [Khan et al., 2024](#)).

This finding reveals an important limitation within the existing literature. Most studies implicitly assume a linear progression from digital marketing adoption to engagement and ultimately to positive consumer outcomes. Adoption-centric theories, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), primarily focus on explaining consumers' willingness to adopt and use digital technologies ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)). However, these frameworks provide limited insight into what occurs after adoption, particularly regarding the mechanisms that transform engagement into enduring consumer relationships. As a result, the literature remains heavily focused on technology acceptance while paying comparatively less attention to post-adoption relational dynamics.

The reviewed evidence suggests that consumer engagement should not be viewed as a direct proxy for loyalty. Across multiple emerging economy contexts, consumers frequently interact with digital marketing content, participate in social media campaigns, follow influencers, and engage with online platforms without necessarily developing long-term commitment toward a specific brand ([Voorveld et al., 2018](#); [Winell et al., 2023](#)). In highly competitive digital environments, engagement often reflects temporary attention rather than durable relational attachment. This distinction is particularly important because engagement metrics are frequently used by practitioners as indicators of marketing effectiveness, despite limited evidence that such interactions consistently translate into enduring consumer relationships.

The existence of this conversion gap can be attributed to several contextual conditions that characterize emerging economies. First, institutional trust remains uneven across many developing markets. Consumers may trust a particular platform or digital campaign sufficiently to engage with content, yet remain reluctant to establish long-term relationships due to concerns regarding transaction security, product authenticity, privacy protection, or dispute resolution mechanisms ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Bao et al., 2025](#)). Second, variations in digital literacy influence consumers' ability to evaluate digital information and navigate online transactions effectively ([Djimesah et al., 2026](#)). Third, differences in technological infrastructure and platform reliability can affect the consistency of consumer experiences ([International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#)). Finally, regulatory uncertainty and weak governance structures may reduce confidence in digital ecosystems, limiting the translation of engagement into loyalty and advocacy outcomes ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#)).

Comparative evidence further suggests that the magnitude of the conversion gap varies across contexts. In relatively mature digital markets, stronger institutional environments and more developed digital infrastructures facilitate the transformation of engagement into loyalty and advocacy ([Pingali et al., 2023](#); [Bao et al., 2025](#)). In contrast, markets characterized by institutional fragility, infrastructure constraints, and lower levels of consumer confidence often exhibit weaker relationships between engagement and

long-term behavioral outcomes ([Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#)). These findings indicate that the effectiveness of digital marketing cannot be fully understood without considering the contextual conditions under which consumer interactions occur.

The concept of the conversion gap therefore provides a theoretical lens for explaining why similar digital marketing strategies may generate substantially different outcomes across emerging economies. Rather than assuming that adoption and engagement automatically lead to loyalty, this review argues that the relationship is contingent upon institutional and contextual factors that influence consumers' willingness to convert short-term interactions into sustained commitment. This perspective aligns with broader calls for contextualizing digital marketing theories beyond technologically deterministic explanations and toward institutionally embedded consumer behavior ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019](#)).

Consequently, the findings suggest that the primary challenge facing digital marketing in emerging economies is no longer encouraging adoption alone, but understanding the conditions under which engagement can be successfully transformed into long-term consumer value. This perspective extends existing adoption-centric theories by shifting attention from technology acceptance toward post-adoption conversion mechanisms. By introducing the conversion gap as a distinct conceptual problem, this review contributes a more nuanced explanation of digital marketing effectiveness in emerging economies and provides the foundation for the proposed Institutional Conversion Framework developed in the following section.

Synthesis of Theoretical and Empirical Foundations

Table 2. Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Digital Marketing Adoption and Consumer Impact in Emerging Economies

Framework Component	Construct	Conceptual Definition (Synthesis)	Supporting Literature
Technological Determinants	Perceived Usefulness	Degree to which digital marketing tools enhance consumer decision efficiency and value perception	(Dwivedi et al., 2021)
	Perceived Ease of Use	Extent to which digital platforms are perceived as effortless and user-friendly	(Alalwan, 2018 ; Djimesah et al., 2026)
	Interactivity	Two-way communication capability between brand and consumer	(Farivar et al., 2023)
	Personalization	Customization of content based on consumer data and preferences	(Bhuiyan, 2024 ; McKee et al., 2025)
	Content Quality	Relevance, informativeness, and entertainment value of digital content	(Dwivedi et al., 2021)
	Mobile Compatibility	Optimization of marketing activities for mobile-first environments	(Bao et al., 2025 ; GSMA, 2024 ; Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019)
Contextual & Institutional Factors	Institutional Trust	Consumer confidence in regulatory systems and online transaction security	(Bao et al., 2025 ; Roreng & Halik, 2025 ; Vacca et al., 2021)
	Digital Infrastructure	Availability and reliability of internet and mobile connectivity	(HALIK et al., 2023 ; International)

Framework Component	Construct	Conceptual Definition (Synthesis)	Supporting Literature
Digital Marketing Adoption			Telecommunication Union, 2023)
	Cultural Norms / Social Influence	Role of collectivism and peer influence in digital engagement	(Choudhary et al., 2024 ; J. B. Halik & Halik, 2024)
	Digital Literacy	Consumer capability to effectively navigate digital platforms	(Djimesah et al., 2026)
	Perceived Risk	Concerns regarding privacy, fraud, and data misuse	(Firmansyah & Arif, 2023 ; Roreng & Halik, 2025)
	Social Media Marketing	Organizational integration of social platforms for engagement and promotion	(Alalwan, 2018 ; Dwivedi et al., 2021)
	Influencer Marketing	Use of opinion leaders to shape consumer attitudes	(Farivar et al., 2023; A. S. Londong et al., 2024)
	Mobile Marketing	Marketing activities delivered through mobile devices	(Bao et al., 2025 ; De Canio et al., 2021)
Psychological Mediators	Data-Driven Marketing	Use of analytics and AI to optimize targeting and personalization	(Dwivedi et al., 2021 ; Sahetapy et al., 2025)
	Customer Engagement	Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in brand interactions	(Hollebeek, 2019 ; Sarker et al., 2025)
	Perceived Value	Consumer evaluation of benefits relative to costs	(Khan et al., 2024 ; Yadav et al., 2015)
	Trust	Belief in brand reliability and integrity in digital environments	(Purandare, 2024)
	Brand Experience	Sensory and affective responses evoked by digital interactions	(Voramontri & Klieb, 2019)
	Satisfaction	Post-interaction evaluation of digital marketing experience	(Dash et al., 2025 ; Mergel et al., 2019)
	Purchase Intention	Likelihood of engaging in transaction following digital exposure	(Alalwan, 2018 ; Purandare, 2024)
Consumer Behavioral Outcomes	Brand Loyalty	Commitment to repurchase and maintain brand relationship	(Winell et al., 2023)
	eWOM / Advocacy	Online word-of-mouth and recommendation behaviors	(Khan et al., 2024)
	Repurchase Behavior	Actual continuation of transactional behavior	(Dash et al., 2025)
	Long-Term Relationship Commitment	Sustained relational engagement beyond transactional exchange	(Hollebeek, 2019)
Cross-Level Moderators	Age	Generational differences in digital responsiveness	(Li et al., 2021)
	Income Level	Purchasing power affecting digital responsiveness	(Bao et al., 2025)
	Market Digital Maturity	Stage of technological development within the economy	(International Telecommunication

Framework Component	Construct	Conceptual Definition (Synthesis)	Supporting Literature
	Product Type (Hedonic vs. Utilitarian)	Nature of product influencing digital persuasion effectiveness	Union, 2023 ; UNDP, 2024) (Dwivedi et al., 2021)

Source: Compile from previous literature (2026)

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications: Beyond TAM and UTAUT

The findings of this review offer important theoretical implications for understanding digital marketing effectiveness in emerging economies. A dominant pattern across the reviewed studies is the continued reliance on adoption-centric theories, particularly the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). While these frameworks have substantially contributed to explaining consumers' intentions to adopt and use digital technologies, the present synthesis suggests that their explanatory power becomes increasingly limited when examining post-adoption consumer outcomes ([Cho & Jeon, 2023](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)).

TAM and UTAUT primarily focus on the antecedents of technology acceptance, emphasizing constructs such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence ([Cho & Jeon, 2023](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)). These factors effectively explain why consumers engage with digital platforms and respond to digital marketing initiatives. However, the reviewed evidence indicates that successful adoption does not necessarily lead to enduring consumer relationships. Consumers may actively interact with digital content, participate in online communities, and express purchase intentions without developing sustained loyalty, advocacy, or long-term commitment toward a brand ([Clement Addo et al., 2021](#); [Dash et al., 2025](#); [Winell et al., 2023](#)).

This inconsistency reveals an important theoretical gap. Existing adoption models implicitly assume a relatively linear relationship between technology acceptance and favorable behavioral outcomes. In contrast, the findings of this review demonstrate that the relationship

between adoption and long-term consumer value is neither automatic nor universally stable. Instead, it is shaped by a complex set of contextual conditions that extend beyond the scope of conventional adoption theories ([Bao et al., 2025](#); [Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [Pingali et al., 2023](#)).

The concept of the conversion gap proposed in this review provides a useful lens for addressing this limitation. The findings suggest that the critical challenge in emerging economies is not merely encouraging consumers to adopt digital platforms, but understanding how engagement can be transformed into sustainable relational outcomes. While TAM and UTAUT explain the initiation of digital interactions, they provide limited insight into the mechanisms through which engagement evolves into trust, loyalty, advocacy, and long-term customer value ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#); [Walean et al., 2025](#)).

The review further indicates that institutional conditions play a more significant role than is typically acknowledged within traditional adoption frameworks. Factors such as institutional trust, digital literacy, regulatory quality, platform governance, and technological infrastructure repeatedly emerge as influential determinants of post-adoption outcomes ([Bao et al., 2025](#); [Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#)). These contextual influences help explain why similar digital marketing strategies often produce substantially different results across emerging economies, even when adoption levels appear comparable. Consequently, consumer responses cannot be fully understood through individual-level technology perceptions alone.

Another important implication concerns the integration of technological and relational perspectives. Existing studies frequently examine technology adoption, customer engagement, trust, and loyalty as separate research streams ([Dwivedi](#)

[et al., 2021](#); [Hollebeek, 2019](#)). The evidence synthesized in this review suggests that these constructs should be viewed as interconnected components of a broader consumer conversion process. Digital marketing effectiveness depends not only on consumers' willingness to use digital technologies but also on their ability to develop confidence, relational commitment, and perceived value within a specific institutional environment ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Khan et al., 2024](#); [Winell et al., 2023](#)).

Accordingly, this review extends adoption-centric theories by shifting analytical attention from technology acceptance toward post-adoption conversion mechanisms. Rather than viewing adoption as the ultimate outcome of digital marketing efforts, the findings position adoption as an initial stage within a broader process through which consumer engagement may—or may not—be converted into long-term relational outcomes. This perspective contributes to the literature by emphasizing that digital marketing effectiveness is contingent upon both technological acceptance and contextual conversion conditions.

Taken together, these findings suggest the need for a more integrative theoretical perspective capable of linking adoption, engagement, institutional conditions, and long-term consumer outcomes. To address this need, the next section introduces the Institutional Conversion Framework for Emerging Economies, which conceptualizes digital marketing effectiveness as a contingent process shaped by the interaction between technological, relational, and institutional factors.

Institutional Conversion Framework for Emerging Economies

Building upon the concept of the conversion gap, this review proposes an Institutional Conversion Framework (ICF) to explain how digital marketing adoption is translated into long-term consumer outcomes within emerging economies. The framework responds to the limitations of existing adoption-centric models by emphasizing that digital marketing effectiveness is not determined solely by technological acceptance but also by the institutional and contextual conditions that shape post-adoption consumer behavior ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)).

The proposed framework conceptualizes digital marketing effectiveness as a sequential yet

contingent process. The process begins with digital marketing adoption, which is influenced by traditional technological factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, interactivity, personalization, and social influence ([Alalwan, 2018](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#)). Consistent with TAM and UTAUT, these factors encourage consumers to engage with digital platforms and marketing content ([Cho & Jeon, 2023](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)).

However, adoption alone does not guarantee meaningful consumer outcomes. Following adoption, consumers enter an engagement stage characterized by interactions with brands through social media platforms, mobile applications, influencer content, digital communities, and personalized marketing initiatives ([Clement Addo et al., 2021](#); [De Canio et al., 2021](#); [Farivar et al., 2023](#)). At this stage, consumers may demonstrate high levels of participation, interaction, and purchase intention. Nevertheless, the reviewed evidence indicates that engagement frequently remains transactional rather than relational ([Winell et al., 2023](#); [Dash et al., 2025](#)).

The framework therefore introduces the concept of an institutional conversion mechanism, which represents the critical process through which engagement is transformed into long-term consumer value. This mechanism is shaped by several contextual conditions that repeatedly emerged across the reviewed studies.

First, institutional trust influences consumers' confidence in digital transactions, platform integrity, privacy protection, and dispute resolution systems. Higher levels of institutional trust increase the likelihood that consumers will translate positive engagement experiences into sustained commitment and loyalty ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Hidayat et al., 2021](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#)).

Second, digital literacy affects consumers' ability to evaluate online information, recognize credible content, manage digital risks, and utilize digital services effectively. Consumers with higher digital literacy are more likely to derive value from digital interactions and maintain longer-term relationships with brands ([Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [Bao et al., 2025](#)).

Third, platform governance plays an important role in shaping perceived fairness, transparency, accountability, and content reliability. Effective governance mechanisms reduce uncertainty and strengthen consumer

confidence in digital ecosystems ([McKee et al., 2025](#); [Vacca et al., 2021](#)).

Fourth, market maturity influences the extent to which digital marketing initiatives can generate sustainable outcomes. In more mature digital markets, stronger infrastructures, established payment systems, and greater consumer familiarity with digital commerce facilitate the conversion of engagement into loyalty and advocacy. In contrast, institutional fragility and infrastructure constraints may weaken this conversion process ([Pingali et al., 2023](#); [International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#)).

The framework proposes that long-term consumer outcomes—including loyalty, advocacy, retention, satisfaction, and relationship commitment—are not direct consequences of adoption. Instead, they emerge when engagement successfully passes through the institutional conversion mechanism. This perspective explains why similar digital marketing strategies often produce divergent outcomes across emerging economies despite comparable levels of adoption and engagement ([Dash et al., 2025](#); [Walean et al., 2025](#)).

From a theoretical perspective, the Institutional Conversion Framework extends existing adoption theories by integrating technological, relational, and institutional dimensions into a unified explanatory model. Rather than treating adoption as the endpoint of digital marketing effectiveness, the framework positions adoption as the beginning of a broader conversion process conditioned by contextual factors. Consequently, the framework offers a more comprehensive explanation of consumer behavior in emerging economies where institutional environments, digital capabilities, and governance structures vary substantially across contexts ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#); [Dwivedi et al., 2021](#)).

The framework further contributes to the literature by shifting the focus of digital marketing research from adoption success to conversion effectiveness (see **Figure 2**). This shift highlights the importance of understanding not only whether consumers engage with digital technologies, but also whether such engagement can be transformed into sustainable consumer relationships. As digital ecosystems continue to evolve across emerging markets, future research should empirically test the proposed framework across different institutional and cultural settings to

validate its explanatory power and identify context-specific conversion mechanisms.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this review offer several important managerial implications for firms, digital marketers, platform providers, and policymakers operating in emerging economies. A central implication is that digital marketing success should not be evaluated solely through adoption and engagement metrics. While indicators such as click-through rates, social media interactions, impressions, and purchase intentions remain important, they provide only a partial assessment of marketing effectiveness. Organizations should place greater emphasis on long-term relational outcomes, including customer loyalty, retention, advocacy, and customer lifetime value ([Hollebeek, 2019](#); [Winell et al., 2023](#)).

For marketing practitioners, the findings suggest that generating consumer engagement is necessary but insufficient for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Many firms invest heavily in digital campaigns that successfully attract consumer attention but fail to cultivate enduring customer relationships. Consequently, marketers should move beyond short-term engagement strategies and prioritize trust-building initiatives, personalized value creation, and consistent customer experiences across digital touchpoints. Strengthening consumer trust through transparent communication, reliable service delivery, and responsible data management may significantly improve the conversion of engagement into loyalty ([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#); [Hidayat et al., 2021](#)).

The review also highlights the importance of context-sensitive marketing strategies. Consumer responses to digital marketing are shaped by institutional conditions, cultural norms, and levels of digital maturity. Therefore, strategies that perform effectively in developed markets may not generate equivalent outcomes in emerging economies. Managers should adapt digital marketing initiatives to local conditions by considering factors such as digital literacy, consumer confidence, payment infrastructure, and platform accessibility. Localization efforts are particularly important in culturally diverse and institutionally heterogeneous markets ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#); [Bao et al., 2025](#); [Pingali et al., 2023](#)).

For digital platform providers, the findings underscore the strategic importance of platform governance. Transparent policies, effective content moderation, robust privacy protections, and secure transaction systems contribute to stronger consumer confidence and greater long-term engagement. Platforms that successfully reduce uncertainty and perceived risk are more likely to facilitate the transition from transactional interactions to sustained consumer relationships ([McKee et al., 2025](#); [Vacca et al., 2021](#)).

The review further suggests that firms should carefully manage personalization strategies. Although personalized recommendations, targeted advertising, and algorithm-driven content can enhance consumer engagement, excessive personalization may generate privacy concerns and perceptions of manipulation. Managers should therefore balance personalization with transparency, ensuring that consumers understand how their data are collected and utilized. Ethical data practices may strengthen trust and improve long-term relationship outcomes ([Bhuiyan, 2024](#); [McKee et al., 2025](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#)).

From a policy perspective, the findings indicate that digital marketing effectiveness is influenced by broader institutional environments. Policymakers can support sustainable digital market development by improving consumer protection frameworks, strengthening cybersecurity regulations, enhancing digital literacy programs, and promoting transparent governance of digital platforms. Such initiatives may reduce institutional uncertainty and create conditions that facilitate the conversion of consumer engagement into long-term economic and social value ([International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#); [Djimesah et al., 2026](#)).

Overall, the findings suggest that the primary managerial challenge in emerging economies is not simply encouraging consumers to adopt digital technologies, but creating institutional and relational conditions that enable engagement to evolve into trust, loyalty, and sustained customer commitment. Organizations that successfully address this challenge are likely to achieve more durable and meaningful consumer relationships in increasingly competitive digital environments ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#)).

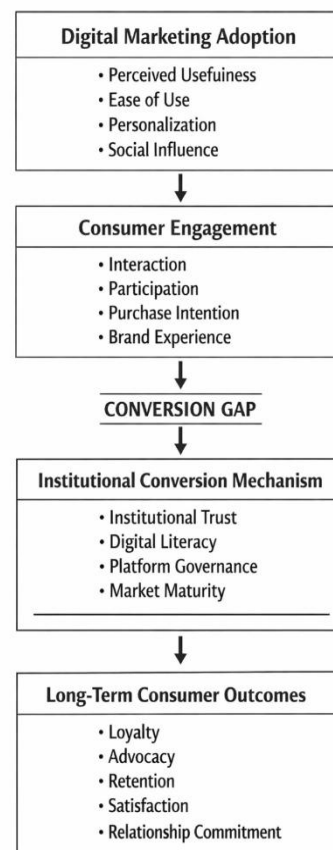


Figure 2. Institutional Conversion Framework for Emerging Economies

Future Research Directions

The findings of this review highlight several promising directions for future research. While the literature on digital marketing adoption in emerging economies has expanded considerably over the past decade, important theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps remain unresolved ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Snyder, 2019](#)).

First, future studies should move beyond adoption-centric perspectives and examine the mechanisms through which consumer engagement is transformed into long-term relational outcomes. The concept of the conversion gap introduced in this review suggests that adoption and engagement do not automatically result in loyalty, advocacy, or retention. Future research should therefore investigate the processes, conditions, and behavioral pathways that facilitate or inhibit this conversion. Particular attention should be given to identifying the institutional and contextual factors that shape post-adoption consumer behavior

([Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021](#); [Hassan et al., 2025](#); [Walean et al., 2025](#)).

Second, further empirical validation of the proposed Institutional Conversion Framework is needed. Researchers should examine the relative influence of institutional trust, digital literacy, platform governance, and market maturity across different emerging economy contexts. Comparative studies would be particularly valuable in determining whether these factors operate consistently across regions or whether their effects vary according to specific cultural, economic, and regulatory conditions ([Bao et al., 2025](#); [Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [Pingali et al., 2023](#)).

Third, greater emphasis should be placed on cross-country and cross-regional comparisons. The existing literature remains heavily concentrated in selected emerging markets, particularly Southeast Asia and India, while evidence from Africa, Latin America, and smaller developing economies remains comparatively limited. Future studies should investigate how differences in institutional environments, digital infrastructures, and consumer cultures influence digital marketing effectiveness. Such comparative analyses would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of contextual heterogeneity within emerging economies ([Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020](#); [International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#)).

Fourth, future research should explore the evolving role of artificial intelligence, algorithmic personalization, and platform ecosystems in shaping consumer outcomes. As AI-driven recommendation systems, automated content generation, and predictive marketing tools become increasingly prevalent, researchers must examine their effects on consumer trust, perceived authenticity, privacy concerns, and long-term relationship development. These technologies may simultaneously enhance engagement and create new forms of consumer resistance, making them important areas for theoretical and empirical investigation ([Bhuiyan, 2024](#); [McKee et al., 2025](#); [Sahetapy et al., 2025](#)).

Fifth, methodological diversification is needed to strengthen causal understanding. The literature remains dominated by cross-sectional survey designs, which limit the ability to capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Future studies should employ longitudinal, experimental, mixed-method, and multi-level research designs to better understand how digital marketing relationships evolve throughout the consumer

journey. Such approaches would provide richer insights into the dynamic nature of engagement, trust formation, and loyalty development ([Naeem et al., 2023](#); [Snyder, 2019](#)).

Sixth, future research should integrate perspectives from marketing, information systems, consumer behavior, and institutional theory to develop more comprehensive explanatory models. The fragmented nature of existing scholarship often isolates technological, relational, and contextual factors rather than examining their interactions. Multi-theoretical frameworks may offer a more robust understanding of digital marketing effectiveness in complex emerging market environments ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#); [Sarker et al., 2025](#)).

Finally, future studies should pay greater attention to vulnerable consumer groups and issues of digital inclusion. Differences in digital literacy, socioeconomic status, age, and geographic accessibility may create unequal opportunities for participation in digital marketplaces. Investigating how digital marketing affects diverse consumer segments can contribute to both theoretical advancement and more inclusive digital development policies ([Djimesah et al., 2026](#); [International Telecommunication Union, 2023](#); [UNDP, 2024](#)).

Collectively, these research directions suggest that the next stage of digital marketing scholarship should focus less on whether consumers adopt digital technologies and more on understanding how institutional, technological, and relational conditions shape the conversion of engagement into sustainable consumer value. Advancing this agenda will be essential for developing theories that more accurately reflect the realities of consumer behavior in emerging economies.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined the impact of digital marketing adoption on consumer behavior in emerging economies by synthesizing evidence from 47 substantive studies published between 2015 and 2025. The findings indicate that digital marketing adoption is influenced by a combination of technological, social, and institutional factors, including perceived usefulness, ease of use, social influence, trust, digital literacy, and infrastructural readiness. While digital marketing initiatives consistently enhance consumer

engagement, purchase intention, and brand interaction, their effects on long-term outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, retention, and relationship commitment remain considerably less consistent.

A central contribution of this review is the identification of a persistent conversion gap between consumer engagement and sustainable consumer outcomes. The findings suggest that adoption and engagement should not be assumed to automatically translate into long-term loyalty. Instead, the effectiveness of digital marketing is conditioned by institutional and contextual factors that influence consumers' willingness to transform short-term interactions into enduring relationships with brands and platforms.

The review further demonstrates the limitations of adoption-centric theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) in explaining post-adoption consumer behavior. Although these frameworks remain valuable for understanding technology acceptance, they provide limited insight into the mechanisms through which engagement evolves into long-term consumer value. To address this limitation, this study proposes the Institutional Conversion Framework for Emerging Economies, which integrates technological, relational, and institutional dimensions into a unified explanatory model. The framework highlights the roles of institutional trust, digital literacy, platform governance, and market maturity as critical conditions shaping the conversion process from engagement to loyalty.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that organizations should move beyond traditional engagement metrics and prioritize strategies that foster trust, transparency, consumer confidence, and long-term relationship development. Digital marketers, platform providers, and policymakers must recognize that sustainable digital marketing success depends not only on attracting consumer attention but also on creating institutional environments that support enduring consumer commitment.

Despite its contributions, this review is subject to several limitations. The evidence base remains concentrated in specific emerging markets, while comparative and longitudinal studies remain relatively scarce. Future research should therefore empirically test the proposed Institutional Conversion Framework across different institutional, cultural, and technological

contexts. Further investigation into the role of artificial intelligence, platform governance, and digital inclusion is also necessary to advance understanding of how engagement can be effectively converted into sustainable consumer value.

Overall, this review shifts the focus of digital marketing scholarship beyond technology adoption toward the broader challenge of conversion effectiveness. By emphasizing the institutional conditions that shape post-adoption outcomes, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior and provides a foundation for future theoretical and empirical developments in emerging economy research.

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