

Exploration of Consumer Behavior towards Digital Marketing Strategies in Strengthening Brand Strategy A Study on Amanda Mart Consumers

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to analyse consumer behavior toward digital marketing methods in enhancing brand strategy at Amanda Mart. The rapid growth of digital technology has profoundly changed consumer behavior, notably in the processes of information searching, evaluation, and purchasing decisions. Therefore, the application of digital marketing has become a significant part in developing and reinforcing brand image in consumers' thoughts. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Amanda Mart consumers who actively use social media and digital platforms, supported by observation and documentation. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their experience interacting with Amanda Mart's digital content. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings indicate that digital marketing strategies, particularly through social media and marketplaces, significantly influence consumer behavior in shaping perceptions and trust toward Amanda Mart's brand. Engaging visual content, customer testimonials, and active interaction with consumers are key factors in increasing engagement and customer loyalty. In addition, the ease of access to information and digital transactions also encourages higher purchase intention. In conclusion, the effective implementation of digital marketing strategies can strengthen Amanda Mart's brand strategy by enhancing consumer trust, customer experience, and loyalty. This study is expected to provide insights for SMEs in optimizing digital marketing strategies to improve business competitiveness.

Keywords: *Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Brand Strategy, SMEs*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly transformed the way consumers interact with brands, shifting everyday commercial experiences from physical to digital spaces (H. Hendrayati et al., 2024). Social media platforms, online marketplaces, and various digital channels have become central arenas in which brand identities are constructed, negotiated, and experienced (Fu et al., 2021). Within this shifting landscape, digital marketing has emerged not merely as a promotional tool, but as a medium through which meaning, trust, and loyalty between consumers and brands are continuously shaped (Pandowo, 2016). For SMEs operating in competitive retail environments, navigating this digital terrain presents both significant opportunities and complex challenges that merit deeper exploration (R. Y. I. H. Hendrayati, 2024).

Existing studies on digital marketing tend to privilege quantitative measurements — conversion rates, click-through metrics, and sales figures — often at the expense of understanding the lived experiences and interpretive processes of consumers themselves (Ubaydullo Xoshimjonov, 2023). How consumers make sense of a brand's digital presence, how trust is gradually built through repeated digital interactions, and how emotional engagement with content translates into brand loyalty are dimensions that numbers alone cannot fully capture (Shobeiri et al., 2018). This interpretive gap underscores the need for qualitative inquiry that centers the voices (Xu et al., 2024), perceptions, and experiences (Chan-Olmsted & Kim, 2023) of consumers as active meaning-makers rather than passive data points (Don, 2009).

This study responds to that gap by exploring consumer behavior toward digital marketing strategies at Amanda Mart, a local SME retailer that has actively embraced digital platforms as a primary channel for brand communication (Kartunova, 2018). Rather than measuring outcomes, this research seeks to understand the process (Jewell et al., 2020)

— how consumers perceive, interpret, and respond to Amanda Mart's digital content, and how those experiences collectively contribute to the reinforcement of brand strategy (Ardissa et al., 2025). Amanda Mart represents a compelling case precisely because it reflects the realities faced by many SMEs (Oktaviani, 2018): limited resources, growing digital competition, and the pressing need to cultivate meaningful consumer relationships through digital means (H. Hendrayati et al., 2024).

Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive framework, this study gathered data through in-depth interviews with purposively selected consumers who actively engage with Amanda Mart's digital content across social media and marketplace platforms (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020). Observations and documentation further enriched the data, allowing for a more contextual and layered understanding of the phenomena under study. Data were analyzed thematically through a process of reduction, display, and interpretive conclusion drawing (Kottler, 2017).

Ultimately, this study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the human dimensions underlying digital marketing effectiveness — contributing not only to academic discourse on consumer behavior and brand strategy in SME contexts, but also providing meaningful, practice-oriented insights for businesses seeking to deepen their digital engagement with consumers.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive framework, aiming to explore and interpret consumer experiences and perceptions toward Amanda Mart's digital marketing strategies in depth. Qualitative inquiry was chosen because it allows the researcher to capture the richness of human experience — how consumers think, feel, and make meaning — rather than simply measuring behavioral outcomes (LEAVY, 2019). This approach is particularly appropriate given the study's focus on the interpretive and relational dimensions of consumer-brand interaction in digital spaces. Data were collected through three complementary methods. First, in-depth interviews were conducted as the primary data source, involving ten informants selected through purposive sampling. Informants were chosen based on specific criteria: they must be active consumers of Amanda Mart who regularly engage with the brand's content across social media platforms and online marketplaces. Interview sessions were conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing conversations to develop organically while remaining guided by a core set of thematic questions concerning digital content perception, trust formation, and purchasing behavior. Second, non-participatory observation was carried out to examine Amanda Mart's digital presence across its active platforms, including Instagram and marketplace pages, providing contextual grounding for interview findings. Third, documentation — including screenshots of promotional content, customer reviews, and engagement metrics — served as supplementary evidence to triangulate and enrich the primary data.

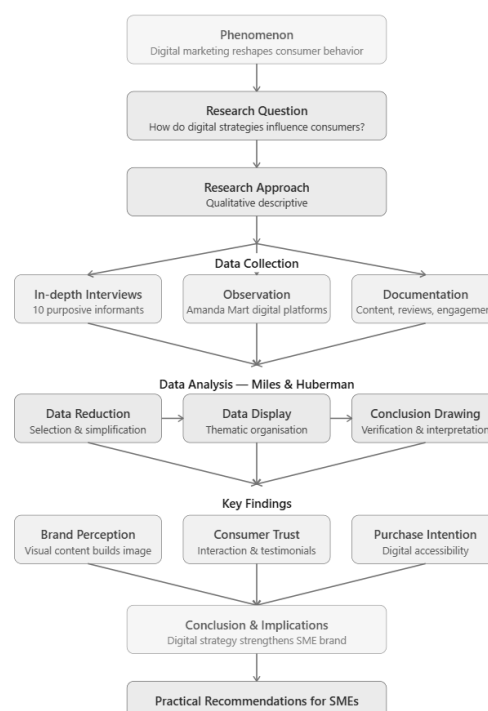


Figure 1. Research Flow

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising three iterative stages: data reduction, in which raw interview transcripts were systematically condensed into meaningful units; data display, in which emerging patterns were organized thematically; and conclusion drawing, in which interpretations were verified through member checking and cross-referencing with observational data. Trustworthiness was ensured through prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources, and thick description.

3. RESULT

The findings of this study are organized into three overarching themes that emerged from the data: brand perception formation, trust-building through digital engagement, and the influence of digital accessibility on purchase intention.

3.1. Brand Perception Through Visual Content.

Informants consistently highlighted the role of visual content in shaping their initial impressions of Amanda Mart. Participants described how aesthetically curated product photographs, short promotional videos, and visually coherent feed layouts on Instagram created a sense of professionalism and credibility that distinguished Amanda Mart from competitors. One informant noted that the quality of the content made the brand feel "more trustworthy, like they actually care about what they're selling." This suggests that visual presentation functions not merely as decoration, but as a communicative signal of brand values and quality standards.

3.2. Trust Formation Through Interaction and Testimonials.

A second prominent theme concerned how consumer trust was cultivated over time through two distinct but interrelated mechanisms: responsive interaction and peer testimonials. Informants reported that Amanda Mart's practice of promptly replying to comments, answering direct messages, and acknowledging customer feedback fostered a sense of being valued and heard. Simultaneously, the presence of genuine customer reviews and user-generated content on both social media and marketplace platforms served as powerful trust cues. Consumers described testimonials as more persuasive than formal advertising, as they perceived them as authentic and unfiltered accounts of real purchasing experiences.

3.3. Digital Accessibility and Purchase Intention.

The third theme revealed that the ease of accessing product information and completing transactions digitally played a significant role in encouraging purchasing behavior. Informants expressed that the availability of detailed product descriptions, transparent pricing, and straightforward checkout processes on marketplace platforms reduced the perceived risk associated with online purchasing. Several participants noted that the convenience of discovering a product on Instagram and completing the purchase directly through a linked marketplace page created a seamless consumer journey that lowered decision-making barriers and accelerated purchase intention.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate the multidimensional ways in which digital marketing strategies shape consumer behavior and contribute to brand strategy reinforcement at the sme level. Drawing on the three themes identified — brand perception, trust formation, and digital accessibility — this discussion situates the findings within broader theoretical conversations on consumer behavior, digital branding, and sme marketing.

The first theme, concerning the role of visual content in brand perception formation, aligns with established arguments in the literature on visual rhetoric and brand communication. Consumers in this study did not passively receive visual content; rather, they actively interpreted it as evidence of the brand's professionalism, attention to detail, and underlying values. This finding supports the notion that in digital environments, aesthetics function as a proxy for quality — particularly in contexts where consumers cannot physically inspect products prior to purchase. For Amanda mart, the deliberate curation of visual content thus operates as a form of symbolic brand-building, communicating identity and positioning without explicit verbal messaging. This has important implications for smes, which often lack large advertising budgets but can nonetheless construct compelling brand narratives through consistent and thoughtful visual communication on low-cost platforms such as instagram.

The second theme — trust formation through interaction and testimonials — resonates deeply with social influence theory and the growing body of research on electronic word-of-mouth (ewom). Informants in this study described testimonials not as supplementary information, but as the primary basis upon which trust decisions were made. This

reflects a broader shift in consumer epistemology in the digital age: consumers increasingly look to peer experiences rather than brand-produced content as their most reliable source of information. Amanda mart's cultivation of authentic user-generated content and its responsiveness in digital communication channels therefore represent strategically significant practices, as they effectively leverage social proof to reduce consumer uncertainty and build relational trust. The responsiveness of the brand in particular — replying to comments and messages — emerged as a humanizing force, transforming what might otherwise be a transactional relationship into something more personal and dialogic. This dimension of digital engagement is frequently underestimated in sme marketing strategy, yet the data from this study suggest it may be among the most consequential drivers of consumer loyalty.

The third theme, regarding digital accessibility and purchase intention, points to the critical importance of frictionless consumer journeys in driving conversion behavior. The integrated pathway from content discovery on social media to transaction completion on marketplace platforms was experienced by informants as convenience-enhancing rather than intrusive, provided the content itself had already established sufficient credibility and trust. This finding echoes the stimulus-organism-response (s-o-r) framework, wherein digital stimuli — visual content, testimonials, interactive communication — condition internal consumer states that ultimately manifest in behavioral responses such as purchase intention. The reduction of transactional friction through clear product information and streamlined checkout processes thus serves as the final enabling condition in a chain of influence that begins with perception and passes through trust.

Taken together, these three themes reveal that effective digital marketing for Amanda mart is not reducible to any single tactic or platform. Rather, it operates as an integrated system in which visual branding, relational engagement, and transactional convenience work in concert to produce favorable consumer outcomes. This systemic perspective challenges the tendency in sme marketing practice to treat digital channels as isolated tools rather than as interconnected components of a broader brand experience.

The findings also carry meaningful implications for how smes conceptualize brand strategy in the digital age. Brand strength, as experienced by Amanda mart's consumers, does not reside solely in logo recognition or product quality — it is actively co-constructed through every digital interaction, from a visually appealing post to a timely reply to a customer inquiry. This positions digital marketing not as a peripheral support function but as a central mechanism of brand strategy itself.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how digital marketing strategies employed by Amanda Mart influence consumer behavior and contribute to the reinforcement of brand strategy. Through qualitative inquiry involving in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, three core themes emerged: the formation of brand perception through visual content, the cultivation of trust via responsive interaction and peer testimonials, and the role of digital accessibility in encouraging purchase intention.

The findings affirm that digital marketing, when implemented thoughtfully and consistently, functions as far more than a promotional mechanism — it becomes the very medium through which brand identity is communicated, trust is built, and consumer relationships are sustained over time. For Amanda Mart, the combination of curated visual content, authentic consumer engagement, and seamless digital transaction experiences has collectively produced a brand environment in which consumers feel informed, valued, and confident in their purchasing decisions.

From a practical standpoint, these insights offer actionable guidance for SMEs seeking to strengthen their digital marketing strategies. Investing in visual content quality, maintaining responsive and humanized communication, and ensuring transactional convenience across digital platforms are not peripheral concerns — they are foundational to brand competitiveness in today's digital marketplace.

This study acknowledges certain limitations, including its focus on a single SME case and a relatively small informant group, which naturally constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future research would benefit from comparative studies across multiple SME contexts, as well as longitudinal approaches that track how consumer perceptions evolve alongside changes in digital marketing strategy. Nonetheless, this study contributes a meaningful, consumer-centered perspective to the growing discourse on digital marketing and brand strategy in SME environments.

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