



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/gijea.v4i3>
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

The Role Of Business Communication In Enhancing Consumer Purchase Intention In The Digital Era

Hardi Utomo¹

¹STIE AMA Salatiga, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, hardiutomo@stieama.ac.id

Corresponding Author: hardiutomo@stieama.ac.id¹

Abstract: This study examines how business communication shapes consumer purchase intention in the digital era, integrating external strategies (digital marketing, branding) with internal dynamics (employee engagement, organizational culture). Using a qualitative systematic literature review guided by PRISMA, 22 peer-reviewed articles (2019-2024) were identified from four databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, Garuda) and analyzed through critical thematic synthesis. Five dominant themes emerged: digital marketing strengthens brand visibility and purchase intention (14 articles); brand trust mediates communication exposure and purchase decisions (8 articles); transparent internal communication reinforces external communication effectiveness (5 articles); digital transformation shifts communication from broadcast to interactive engagement (7 articles); and AI-driven personalization raises purchase intention while introducing ethical tensions (3 articles). Contradictions emerged across crisis contexts and industries; notably, COVID-19-era purchase intention was partly driven by panic-buying rather than brand loyalty, showing that crisis conditions can distort the communication-intention relationship (Naeem, 2021). Organizations must therefore align internal communication culture with external digital marketing to sustain consumer trust. Theoretically, this study positions integrated communication capability as a Resource-Based View asset that bridges external marketing communication and internal organizational communication, demonstrating their interdependence as a source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Keyword: Business Communication, Digital Marketing, Consumer Purchase Intention, Brand Trust, Internal Communication, Systematic Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of information and communication technology has fundamentally altered the landscape of business-consumer interaction. The proliferation of the internet, social media platforms, and mobile connectivity has created a multi-directional communication environment in which consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages but active participants who shape brand narratives and influence purchase decisions (Verhoef et al., 2021; Ali & Kamaruddin, 2024). This shift demands that organizations adopt communication strategies that are simultaneously adaptive, data-driven,

and human-centered. The emergence of digital marketing tools such as SEO, social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and content marketing has transformed traditional one-way advertising into an interactive exchange that enables companies to reach wider markets with greater personalization and cost efficiency (Ryan, 2020; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, a critical gap persists in understanding how internal organizational communication interacts with and reinforces external digital communication. Many organizations invest substantially in external-facing communication channels while neglecting the alignment of internal communication practices with their brand messaging. This misalignment can produce inconsistent brand experiences that erode consumer trust and reduce purchase intention (Men & Yue, 2023; Mishra et al., 2014). Addressing this gap is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where digital adoption among MSMEs is accelerating but often lacks strategic communication frameworks (Fauzi & Sheng, 2020; Azhary et al., 2023). The problem addressed in this study stems from the observation that many companies focus heavily on external digital communication strategies while neglecting the importance of internal communication alignment, leading to inconsistent brand messaging, reduced employee engagement, and ultimately, diminished consumer trust.

This research is guided by three research foci (RF). RF1 examines how business communication in the digital era influences consumer purchase intention. RF2 investigates the role of internal communication in supporting external communication effectiveness. RF3 explores how the integration of external and internal communication creates sustainable competitive advantages in the digital marketplace. The scope of this review is limited to business communication practices between 2019 and 2024, with specific emphasis on the interplay between digital marketing, branding, social media strategies, and internal organizational communication. Theoretically, this research enriches understanding of business communication as an integrated system requiring balance between technology-driven external strategies and human-centered internal approaches. Practically, the findings provide strategic insights for companies to develop more effective and sustainable communication strategies that can enhance competitive advantage and long-term consumer loyalty.

To address these research questions, the discussion below builds directly on the theoretical grounding for business communication and consumer purchase intention introduced above.

Business communication is broadly defined as the purposeful exchange of messages, ideas, and information within and between organizations to achieve specific objectives (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022; Tjiptono & Chandra, 2020). In the digital context, this definition has expanded to encompass multi-platform, real-time interactions between firms and consumers. Kotler et al. (2021), in their Marketing 5.0 framework, argue that technology-mediated communication must balance automation efficiency with authentic human connection, a principle directly applicable to understanding how digital communication influences consumer purchase intention. Communication strategy encompasses planning, management, and selection of appropriate messages, channels, and communicators implemented through digital platforms such as social media and instant messaging, voice and video channels, face-to-face interactions, and written documentation (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). The selection of appropriate communication strategies is crucial in determining message delivery effectiveness and influencing consumer perceptions of the company.

Consumer purchase intention refers to an individual's plan or inclination to purchase a specific product or service in the near future (Kim & Song, 2022; Hanaysha, 2022). The

literature identifies several antecedents of purchase intention in digital environments, including perceived credibility, brand trust, social influence, and information quality. Dwivedi et al. (2021) provide an extensive framework demonstrating that digital and social media marketing activities, when strategically deployed, create meaningful associations between brand communication and consumer decision-making. Digital marketing comprising SEO, SEM, social media marketing, content marketing, and influencer collaborations has emerged as the dominant external communication mechanism for enhancing purchase intention (Ryan, 2020; Yasmin et al., 2020). The effectiveness of digital marketing lies in its ability to facilitate two-way communication, enabling consumers to actively participate in brand conversations and express their opinions and experiences (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Internal communication, while traditionally regarded as a distinct organizational function, has been increasingly recognized as a determinant of external communication quality. Men & Yue (2023) demonstrate that organizations fostering open, emotionally supportive internal communication cultivate higher employee engagement, which subsequently translates into more consistent and authentic consumer interactions. Mishra et al. (2014) further argue that internal communication directly shapes employee advocacy behavior, a form of organic brand ambassador activity that enhances external brand credibility. Branding functions not only as a differentiator but also as a means to create emotional attachment with consumers (Sulistio, 2021; Kotler et al., 2021). A positive brand image increases consumer trust and influences purchase intention, and consistent branding through digital marketing can significantly enhance consumer loyalty (Hanaysha, 2022).

Building on this theoretical foundation, a review of existing literature reveals three prominent gaps. First, while digital marketing and purchase intention have been extensively studied, most studies treat internal communication as an entirely separate domain (e.g., Dwivedi et al., 2021; Ryan, 2020; Hanaysha, 2022, each of which examines digital marketing effectiveness in isolation from internal organizational communication), failing to examine its mediating or moderating role in digital communication effectiveness. Second, research in the Indonesian MSME context remains limited, with most digital communication studies focused on large enterprises in developed economies (Fauzi & Sheng, 2020; Azhary et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2023; Praditya, 2019). Third, the integration of AI-driven personalization into communication strategy raises ethical and practical questions that existing frameworks have yet to fully address (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020; Pelau et al., 2021). Based on the literature review and identified research gaps, this qualitative study focuses on the following research questions:

RF1: How does business communication in the digital era influence consumer purchase intention?

RF2: What is the role of internal communication in supporting external communication effectiveness?

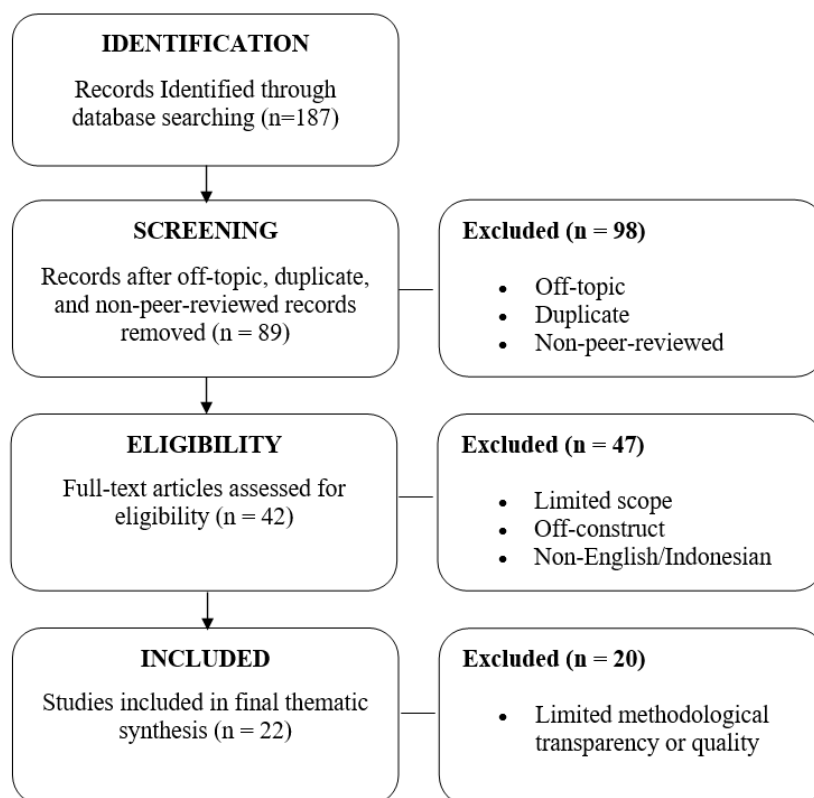
RF3: How can the integration of external and internal communication create sustainable competitive advantages in the digital marketplace?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach through systematic literature review methodology, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Page et al., 2021). The systematic literature review is appropriate for synthesizing existing knowledge and identifying patterns, trends, and gaps in the current understanding of business communication in the digital era, providing a holistic perspective on the integration of internal and external business communication in influencing consumer purchase intention.

Systematic searches were conducted across four academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), and Garuda (Indonesian scientific portal). The search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles published between January 2019 and December 2024. To ensure comprehensive coverage, a combination of Boolean operators (AND, OR) was applied across thematic search strings. Searches were conducted in title and abstract fields by default; in cases where initial results were insufficient, full-text searches were conducted. The search strings applied were as follows: (1) “business communication” OR “organizational communication” AND “digital era” searched in Title and Abstract; (2) “digital marketing” OR “social media marketing” AND “consumer behavior” searched in Title and Abstract; (3) “purchase intention” OR “buying intention” AND “digital” AND “communication” searched in Title, Abstract, and Full-text; (4) “internal communication” OR “employee engagement” AND “branding” OR “external communication” searched in Title and Abstract; and (5) “brand trust” OR “brand equity” AND “digital marketing” AND “consumer” searched in Title and Abstract. Of the four databases searched, the majority of the 22 articles retained in the final synthesis were retrieved via Google Scholar and Scopus. Two Indonesian-language articles (Azhary et al., 2023; Praditya, 2019) were retrieved via Garuda. No article retrieved via DOAJ satisfied the eligibility and quality-assessment criteria described below, so DOAJ contributed to the initial search coverage but not to the final included set; it was retained in the search protocol to ensure comprehensive coverage of open-access Indonesian and international journals.

The article selection process followed the four-stage PRISMA protocol. At the Identification stage, 187 articles were initially retrieved from the four databases using the search strings above. At the Screening stage, 98 articles were removed due to being off-topic, duplicate, or non-peer-reviewed, leaving 89 articles. At the Eligibility Assessment stage, 47 articles were excluded because they had limited scope, did not address the communication and purchase intention relationship, or were not written in English or Indonesian, leaving 42 articles. At the Inclusion stage, a final set of 22 articles was selected for full synthesis after further quality evaluation for methodological rigor and theoretical contribution. Inclusion criteria required articles to: (1) be written in English or Indonesian; (2) address business communication, digital marketing, branding, or internal communication in relation to consumer behavior or purchase intention; (3) be published in peer-reviewed journals between 2019 and 2024; and (4) employ clear and replicable research methods. Exclusion criteria eliminated articles that addressed communication in non-commercial contexts exclusively, lacked methodological transparency (defined as failing to clearly report the sampling procedure, data collection method, and analytic approach; this was assessed qualitatively by the reviewer rather than through a standardized instrument such as CASP or MMAT, which is acknowledged as a limitation), or were conference proceedings, theses, or grey literature.



(numbers based on the selection stages reported in the Method section)

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram Of The Article Selection Process

The 22 selected articles were analyzed using critical thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008), which involves: (1) line-by-line coding of key findings; (2) identification of descriptive themes; and (3) generation of analytical themes that integrate and extend findings beyond individual studies. Special attention was paid to identifying dominant patterns of evidence, contradictions between studies, and gaps in existing knowledge. The limitations of the chosen method include the absence of primary empirical data, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships; potential publication bias as the review relies on published literature; and subjectivity in source selection and interpretation despite efforts to maintain objectivity through the PRISMA protocol.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

A total of 22 articles were included in the final synthesis, derived from 187 initially identified records following the PRISMA selection process. The included studies span multiple disciplinary perspectives including digital marketing, organizational behavior, consumer psychology, and information systems, enabling a multidimensional synthesis. The thematic synthesis revealed five major themes presented as follows.

Table 1. Characteristics of Studies Explicitly Discussed in the Synthesis

No	Author(s), Year	Context / Sector	Theme	Key Finding
1	Dwivedi et al., 2021	Cross-industry digital/social media marketing	1	Digital and social media marketing activities create meaningful associations between brand communication and consumer decision-making.
2	Hanaysha, 2022	Fast-food industry	1, 2	Social media marketing features increase purchase intention with brand trust as mediator; consistent branding strengthens loyalty.

No	Author(s), Year	Context / Sector	Theme	Key Finding
3	Yasmin et al., 2020	General digital marketing	1	Digital marketing activities are effective in engaging and converting consumers.
4	Keegan & Rowley, 2021	Younger consumer segments	1	Influencer marketing shows a strong effect via perceived authenticity and parasocial relationships.
5	Ryan, 2020	General digital marketing	1	Two-way digital communication builds greater consumer trust than traditional advertising.
6	Praditya, 2019	Indonesian online shop	1	Social media and business communication influence online shop business development.
7	Naeem, 2021	COVID-19 crisis context	1 (contradiction)	Social media-driven purchase intention partly explained by panic-buying rather than genuine brand loyalty during crisis.
8	Kim & Song, 2022	Hospitality sector	2	Perceived authenticity of brand communication predicts willingness to purchase.
9	Kotler et al., 2021	Marketing 5.0 framework	2	Brands communicating genuine human values generate deeper trust and purchase intention.
10	Sulistio, 2021	General branding	2	Branding creates emotional attachment and differentiates the firm from competitors.
11	Men & Yue, 2023	Organizational internal communication	3	Positive emotional culture through internal communication raises employee engagement and consistent service delivery.
12	Mishra et al., 2014	Organizational internal communication	3	Internal communication shapes employee advocacy behavior as organic brand ambassadors.
13	Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023	Digital-era organizational communication	3, 4	Temporal gap between classical and digital-era internal communication principles remains theoretically unresolved.
14	Verhoef et al., 2021	Digital transformation, multidisciplinary	4	Documents the shift from broadcast to interactive, data-driven communication.
15	Fauzi & Sheng, 2020	Indonesian MSMEs	4	Digital adoption enables MSMEs to reach consumers via channels previously limited to large firms.
16	Ractham et al., 2022	Thai micro- entrepreneurs	4	Facebook group use supports micro-enterprise communication and consumer engagement.
17	Kumar et al., 2021	AI-enabled marketing	5	AI-enabled personalization increases engagement and purchase likelihood via contextually relevant messaging.
18	Pelau et al., 2021	AI acceptance, service industry	5	Consumer acceptance of AI communication is moderated by perceived anthropomorphism.
19	Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020	AI governance	5	Identifies opportunities and governance challenges in AI-mediated communication (privacy, transparency).

Note: This table summarizes the individually named studies discussed in the thematic synthesis, with the theme(s) to which each contributes. It does not itemize sample size or research design for each of the 22 included articles, as the original full texts of the primary studies were not re-extracted at that level of detail during this review; a full data-extraction table with those fields would need to be compiled from the original 22 articles directly. The remaining three of the 22 included articles are not listed individually here because their contribution to the synthesis was confirmatory rather than distinct: they reinforced the thematic patterns already represented by the studies above without adding a separate qualitative finding, and their contribution is instead reflected in the aggregate thematic frequencies reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Thematic Frequency Across the 22 Included Articles

Theme	Articles Supporting (n)	% of 22 Included Articles
Theme 1: Digital Marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention	14	63.6%
Theme 2: Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable	8	36.4%
Theme 3: Internal Communication and Organizational Alignment	5	22.7%
Theme 4: Digital Transformation and Communication Paradigm Shift	7	31.8%
Theme 5: AI-Driven Personalization and Ethical Considerations	3	13.6%

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% because several articles present evidence relevant to more than one theme (e.g., Hanaysha, 2022 and Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023 each support two themes). Given the qualitative-synthesis design of this review, these frequencies are reported as descriptive proportions rather than pooled effect sizes; a quantitative meta-analysis was not performed because the included studies used heterogeneous measures and designs that are not statistically comparable.

A further limitation concerns potential publication bias. Because this review relies exclusively on published, peer-reviewed literature, studies reporting statistically significant or theoretically favorable results are more likely to have been published and thus more likely to be captured by the search strategy, while studies with null or contradictory findings may be underrepresented (file-drawer effect). This bias cannot be fully corrected within a qualitative thematic synthesis, but two of the included studies (Naeem, 2021; Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023) explicitly report findings that complicate or contradict the dominant pattern, suggesting that the review captured at least some disconfirming evidence. Two distinct contradictions were identified in this way: first, Naeem (2021) shows that crisis conditions (COVID-19) can drive purchase intention through panic-buying rather than genuine brand loyalty, contradicting the dominant assumption that communication-driven purchase intention reflects stable brand trust; second, Nugroho & Rachmawati (2023) suggest that classical internal-communication principles may not retain their full explanatory power in organizations that rely primarily on digital collaboration tools, contradicting the assumption of theoretical continuity between foundational and digital-era internal communication research. Future reviews with access to grey literature, conference proceedings, and unpublished dissertations, or that apply quantitative bias-assessment tools such as funnel plots (where effect sizes are available), would be better positioned to evaluate the extent of publication bias in this literature.

1. Theme 1: Digital Marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention

The synthesis of 14 out of 22 articles consistently confirms that digital marketing activities exert a significant positive influence on consumer purchase intention. Several studies indicate that social media marketing, particularly through Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, directly increases brand exposure and shortens the consumer decision cycle (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hanaysha, 2022; Yasmin et al., 2020). Influencer marketing, as examined by Keegan & Rowley (2021), demonstrates a particularly strong effect on younger consumer segments by leveraging perceived authenticity and parasocial relationships. Consumers place greater trust in social media reviews compared to traditional advertising, as digital media enables two-way interaction and authentic peer-to-peer communication (Ryan, 2020; Praditya, 2019). However, not all evidence points in the same direction. Naeem (2021) found that social media-driven purchase intention during the COVID-19 pandemic was partially explained by panic-buying behavior rather than genuine brand loyalty, suggesting that context can significantly distort the communication-intention relationship. This finding introduces an important caveat: digital communication effectiveness may be mediated by situational and psychological factors that standard marketing metrics do not capture.

2. Theme 2: Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable

A recurring finding across eight reviewed articles is that brand trust and perceived credibility function as critical mediators between communication exposure and purchase

intention. Kim & Song (2022) demonstrate, within the hospitality sector, that consumers' perceived authenticity of a brand's communication significantly predicts their willingness to purchase. Kotler et al. (2021) extend this argument to the broader Marketing 5.0 context, asserting that brands capable of communicating genuine human values generate deeper consumer trust and stronger purchase intentions. Consistent branding across digital channels strengthens brand image and fosters consumer loyalty, creating competitive advantages in crowded marketplaces (Sulistio, 2021; Hanaysha, 2022). Some studies suggest, however, that the mediating role of trust varies by industry and consumer segment. While Kim & Song (2022) establish a strong link in the service sector, the extent to which these findings generalize to fast-moving consumer goods or technology products remains underexplored, pointing to a gap that future empirical research should address.

3. Theme 3: Internal Communication and Organizational Alignment

Five reviewed articles specifically examine the relationship between internal communication and external communication effectiveness. Several studies indicate that organizations cultivating a positive emotional culture through transparent internal communication report higher employee engagement scores, which in turn correlate with more consistent and consumer-oriented service delivery (Men & Yue, 2023). This finding is corroborated by evidence that when employees internalize the brand's values through effective internal communication, they become credible brand ambassadors in consumer-facing interactions (Mishra et al., 2014). However, other research suggests that the temporal gap between foundational internal communication studies and recent digital-era applications creates a theoretical continuity challenge, and it remains unclear whether classical internal communication principles retain their full explanatory power in organizations relying primarily on digital collaboration tools (Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023). This finding highlights that business communication effectiveness requires not only strong external strategies but also solid internal communication foundations.

4. Theme 4: Digital Transformation and Communication Paradigm Shift

Seven articles document a fundamental paradigm shift in business communication driven by digital transformation. Several studies describe this shift as a movement from one-way, broadcast-oriented communication toward interactive, personalized, and data-driven engagement (Verhoef et al., 2021). Complementary evidence from the MSME context documents how digital adoption enables smaller enterprises to engage consumers through communication channels previously accessible only to large corporations (Fauzi & Sheng, 2020; Ractham et al., 2022). Some research indicates that digital transformation success is contingent on simultaneous communication restructuring at both internal and external levels (Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023), while other studies focus more narrowly on technological adoption without adequately addressing organizational culture dimensions. A notable gap exists between MSME-focused studies, primarily in the Indonesian context, and large-enterprise studies predominantly from Western and East Asian contexts, suggesting that cross-context comparisons remain a fertile area for future research.

5. Theme 5: AI-Driven Personalization and Ethical Considerations

Three articles address the emerging role of artificial intelligence in business communication. Some studies document that AI-enabled personalized marketing communication substantially increases consumer engagement and purchase likelihood by delivering contextually relevant messages at optimal times (Kumar et al., 2021). However, other research cautions that consumer acceptance of AI-driven communication is moderated by perceived anthropomorphism: consumers respond positively to AI interactions that feel human but react negatively when AI is perceived as deceptive (Pelau et al., 2021). Kaplan & Haenlein (2020) identify both the opportunities and governance challenges associated with AI-mediated communication, particularly regarding data privacy and algorithmic

transparency. This tension between personalization and perceived manipulation represents a key ethical dimension that has not yet been integrated into mainstream business communication frameworks, representing a dominant gap across the reviewed literature.

Discussion

1. RF1: How Business Communication in the Digital Era Influences Consumer Purchase Intention

The literature synthesis confirms that digital business communication exerts a multi-layered influence on consumer purchase intention. Contrary to linear communication models that position messaging as the sole driver of consumer response, the reviewed studies collectively indicate that the relationship between communication and purchase intention is mediated by brand trust, moderated by consumer psychology, and contextualized by platform dynamics (Kim & Song, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Naeem, 2021). This finding extends the theoretical contribution of Kotler et al.'s (2021) Marketing 5.0 framework by empirically substantiating its argument that value-based, humanized communication is more effective at generating purchase intention than informational messaging alone. The integration of SEO, SEM, and social media strategies, as documented across the reviewed studies, represents the dominant operational pathway through which business communication influences purchase intention in the digital era. Crucially, however, several studies indicate that effectiveness is not a function of channel presence alone: the quality, consistency, and authenticity of the communication message are equally determinative (Ryan, 2020; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). This implies that organizations pursuing digital communication strategies must invest not only in technological infrastructure but in the human and creative dimensions of message crafting. The shift from institutional trust to peer trust documented across the reviewed studies represents a democratization of information influence that companies must acknowledge and leverage through strategies that facilitate positive customer experiences generating authentic reviews and word-of-mouth (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Keegan & Rowley, 2021).

2. RF2: The Role of Internal Communication in Supporting External Communication Effectiveness

The findings reveal that internal communication is not merely a complementary function but a structural prerequisite for external communication effectiveness. Building on Men & Yue (2023) and Mishra et al. (2014), this review advances the argument that organizational communication should be conceptualized as an integrated system in which internal alignment precedes and enables external impact. When employees are well-informed, emotionally engaged, and aligned with organizational values, the quality and consistency of consumer-facing communication improve measurably. This has significant implications for how organizations structure their communication departments and training programs. Companies that treat internal and external communication as operationally separate risk producing fragmented brand experiences, which Azhary et al. (2023) identify as a principal cause of declining consumer trust in Indonesian digital retail contexts. A practical recommendation emerging from this analysis is the adoption of integrated communication planning cycles that simultaneously address internal alignment and external messaging strategies. While much digital marketing research focuses on consumer-facing strategies, this review emphasizes that internal organizational dynamics fundamentally shape external communication effectiveness, addressing a significant research gap identified in the existing literature (Men & Yue, 2023; Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023).

3. RF3: Integration of Internal and External Communication as Competitive Advantage

The third research focus is addressed by synthesizing evidence from five articles examining communication integration at a strategic level (Verhoef et al., 2021; Nugroho & Rachmawati, 2023; Kotler et al., 2021; Men & Yue, 2023; Fauzi & Sheng, 2020). The collective evidence supports the proposition that organizations achieving coherent integration between internal communication culture and external digital communication strategy consistently outperform competitors on consumer trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention metrics. Theoretically, this finding contributes to the Resource-Based View (RBV) of strategy by identifying integrated communication capability as a valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate organizational resource. Organizations that develop this capability create a structural competitive advantage that is not easily replicable through technology acquisition alone. Applying the VRIO framework specifically: the capability is valuable because it improves purchase intention outcomes documented across the reviewed studies; it is rare because few organizations achieve genuine alignment between internal and external communication practices (Men & Yue, 2023; Mishra et al., 2014); it is difficult to imitate because replicating it requires sustained cultural change rather than a discrete, purchasable technology investment; and it meets the Organization criterion when firms establish cross-functional structures, such as routine coordination between marketing and human-resources functions, that allow the capability to be systematically exploited rather than remaining latent. Practically, the evidence suggests that sustainable competitive advantage in digital marketplaces is as much a function of organizational communication culture as it is of marketing technology investment. The recommendation for balanced use of digital technology and interpersonal communication reflects recognition that effective business communication in the digital era requires both technological capability and human connection, as while digital platforms enable scale and efficiency, interpersonal elements such as empathy, emotional intelligence, and relationship building remain essential for creating meaningful consumer connections (Kotler et al., 2021; Ryan, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This systematic literature review synthesized 22 peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2024, selected through a PRISMA-guided process from 187 initially identified records, to examine the role of business communication in enhancing consumer purchase intention in the digital era. Through thematic synthesis, five dominant themes were identified: digital marketing and purchase intention, brand trust as a mediator, internal communication and organizational alignment, digital transformation and communication paradigm shift, and AI-driven personalization with ethical considerations.

Three primary conclusions emerge from this review. First, digital business communication, particularly through social media, influencer partnerships, and personalized content, consistently enhances consumer purchase intention, with brand trust functioning as a critical mediating variable. Several studies confirm this relationship, while others such as Naeem (2021) caution that crisis contexts can distort these patterns, indicating that findings should be interpreted with attention to situational moderators. Second, internal organizational communication is a structural enabler of external communication effectiveness; organizations that invest in employee engagement and internal alignment produce more consistent and credible consumer-facing communication (Men & Yue, 2023; Mishra et al., 2014). Third, the integration of internal and external communication dimensions constitutes a sustainable competitive advantage grounded in Resource-Based View theory, as organizations achieving

this integration consistently outperform those relying solely on external marketing investments (Verhoef et al., 2021; Kotler et al., 2021).

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its articulation of business communication as an integrated, bidirectional organizational system rather than a collection of isolated marketing tactics. By synthesizing evidence from digital marketing, organizational behavior, and consumer psychology literatures, this review provides a unified framework for understanding how communication practices at multiple organizational levels collectively shape consumer purchase behavior. Practically, the findings provide actionable insights for business leaders developing communication strategies, emphasizing the importance of balancing digital innovation with communication authenticity and investing in both external marketing capabilities and internal organizational communication.

Contradictions in the Reviewed Literature

Several important contradictions across the reviewed literature merit explicit acknowledgment. First, while the majority of studies affirm the positive relationship between digital marketing communication and purchase intention, Naeem (2021) demonstrates that crisis contexts can distort this relationship, with elevated purchase intention driven by situational anxiety rather than genuine brand attachment. This challenges the generalizability of digital marketing effectiveness claims outside stable market conditions. The divergence between Naeem's (2021) findings and the mainstream pattern reported elsewhere in this review suggests that crisis contexts moderate the communication-intention relationship rather than simply adding noise to it: under acute situational stress, purchase behavior appears to be driven more by anxiety-reduction motives than by the brand trust and credibility mechanisms that explain purchase intention under normal conditions. Future research should experimentally manipulate perceived crisis severity to isolate this moderating effect and clarify the boundary conditions under which digital marketing communication remains effective. Second, some studies establish strong links between communication variables and purchase intention in specific sectors such as hospitality (Kim & Song, 2022), while other research suggests these relationships may not generalize uniformly across industries, representing a pattern of inconsistency that the field has not yet resolved. Third, the temporal gap between foundational internal communication studies (Mishra et al., 2014) and recent digital-era applications (Men & Yue, 2023) creates a theoretical continuity challenge regarding whether classical internal communication principles retain their explanatory power in organizations relying primarily on digital tools.

Limitations of the Study

This review is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, it relies exclusively on published, peer-reviewed literature, which is susceptible to publication bias, since studies with null or theoretically unfavorable results are less likely to be published and therefore less likely to be captured by the search strategy. Second, as a qualitative systematic literature review, it draws on secondary evidence rather than primary empirical data; consequently, the relationships proposed here between communication practices and purchase intention are associative rather than causal, and cannot be definitively established without empirical testing. Third, despite the structured PRISMA protocol, the selection, coding, and interpretation of articles involved a degree of subjective judgment on the part of the reviewer, which may have introduced bias into the identification of themes and contradictions. Fourth, the generalizability of the findings is constrained by the limited coverage of the reviewed literature, which spans only 2019-2024 and four databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, and Garuda); studies published outside this period, indexed elsewhere, or written in languages other than English or Indonesian were not captured.

Future Research Directions

Future research should pursue longitudinal empirical designs to test the causal relationships identified in this review, with particular attention to the mediating role of brand trust and the moderating influence of industry context. For example, future longitudinal studies should track the same MSMEs over 24 months, measuring internal communication maturity at baseline, 12 months, and 24 months, and its effect on external brand consistency metrics. Comparative studies examining MSME versus large-enterprise communication integration are especially warranted given the asymmetries identified in the reviewed literature. Research investigating the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and blockchain on business communication would also help organizations prepare for future communication landscapes. Practically, organizations seeking to act on these findings should implement weekly cross-functional meetings between marketing and human-resources teams to ensure message consistency before launching digital campaigns, rather than treating internal alignment as a one-time initiative. In conclusion, business communication in the digital era requires a holistic approach that integrates external marketing excellence with internal organizational strength, and companies that successfully balance technological innovation with human-centered communication will be best positioned to enhance consumer purchase intention and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

REFERENCES

- Ali, W., & Kamaruddin, S. A. (2024). The role of communication in business in the digital era: Understanding the foundations of success. *Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanity, and Social Studies*, 4(3), 348-354.
- Azhary, M. R., Agung, M., Prahaski, N., Ulin, T. T., & Suhairi, S. (2023). Strategi dan Peran Komunikasi Bisnis Dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Minat Beli Konsumen di Era Digital. *Inisiatif: Jurnal Ekonomi, Akuntansi Dan Manajemen*, 2(4), 356-364.
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (8th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Dewi, R., Hamid, R. S., Sismar, A., Bachtiar, R. E. P., & Moonai, S. (2023). The role of innovation orientation in improving marketing communication and marketing performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the culinary sector. *Kontigensi: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 11(1), 370-376. <https://doi.org/10.56457/jimk.v11i1.419>
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>
- Fauzi, A. A., & Sheng, M. L. (2020). The digitalization of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs): An institutional theory perspective. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2020.1745536>
- Hanaysha, J. R. (2022). Impact of social media marketing features on consumer's purchase decision in the fast-food industry: Brand trust as a mediator. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 2(2), 100102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjime.2022.100102>

- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2020). Rulers of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence. *Business Horizons*, 63(1), 37-50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2019.09.003>
- Keegan, B. J., & Rowley, J. (2021). Evaluation and decision-making in social media marketing. *Management Decision*, 59(12), 2828-2849. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-10-2019-1450>
- Kim, J., & Song, H. (2022). The influence of perceived credibility on purchase intention via competence and authenticity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, 102617. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102617>
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kumar, V., Rajan, B., Venkatesan, R., & Lecinski, J. (2021). Understanding the role of artificial intelligence in personalized engagement marketing. *California Management Review*, 61(4), 135-155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619859317>
- Men, L. R., & Yue, C. A. (2023). Creating a positive emotional culture: Effect of internal communication and employee engagement. *Public Relations Review*, 49(3), 102254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2023.102254>
- Mishra, K., Boynton, L., & Mishra, A. (2014). Driving employee engagement: The expanded role of internal communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51(2), 183-202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488414525399>
- Naeem, M. (2021). Do social media platforms develop consumer panic buying during the fear of COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102226>
- Nugroho, A., & Rachmawati, I. (2023). Digital transformation and organizational communication: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Communication Management*, 27(2), 145-163.
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hrobjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Pelau, C., Dabija, D. C., & Ene, I. (2021). What makes an AI device human-like? The role of interaction quality, empathy and perceived psychological anthropomorphic characteristics in the acceptance of artificial intelligence in the service industry. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 122, 106855. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106855>
- Praditya, A. (2019). Pengaruh media sosial dan komunikasi bisnis terhadap perkembangan bisnis online shop. *Jurnal Semarak*, 2(1), 31-43.
- Ractham, P., Kaewkitipong, L., & Firpo, D. (2022). The use of Facebook group in micro-entrepreneurship: A case study of housewives in Thailand. *Information Technology & People*, 35(3), 1171-1197. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-05-2020-0337>
- Ryan, D. (2020). *Understanding digital marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation* (5th ed.). Kogan Page Publishers.
- Sulistio, A. B. (2021). Branding Sebagai Inti Dari Promosi Bisnis. In Wati, A. P., et al. (Eds.), *Digital Marketing* (pp. 15-28). Malang: Edulitera.
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8(1), 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>

- Tjiptono, F., & Chandra, G. (2020). Service marketing: Bringing service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (4th ed.). Andi Publisher.
- Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., Qi Dong, J., Fabian, N., & Haenlein, M. (2021). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 122, 889-901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022>
- Yasmin, A., Tasneem, S., & Fatema, K. (2020). Effectiveness of digital marketing in the challenging age: An empirical study. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 6(1), 69-80.