

The Influence of E-Marketing Tools on Purchase Intention of Professional Buyers in the Architectural Hardware Industry: The Mediating Role of Brand Popularity

Dr. Manju Das S. K.¹, Mary Laya Lawrence²

¹Associate Professor, Albertian Institute of Management, Ernakulam
Email: manju[at]aim.edu.in

²MBA (2024-26) Student, Albertian Institute of Management
Email: lawrencelayak[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *The increasing digitalization of marketing activities has significantly transformed how firms engage with professional buyers. E-marketing tools such as online advertising, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and email marketing play an important role in shaping brand perception and influencing purchasing behavior. This study examines the influence of these e-marketing tools on purchase intention among professional buyers in the architectural hardware industry, with brand popularity acting as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 70 respondents including architects, interior designers, builders, and hardware dealers through a structured questionnaire. The relationships among variables were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results reveal that online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing significantly influence brand popularity. Among these, online advertising has the strongest impact on brand popularity. Furthermore, brand popularity significantly influences purchase intention, confirming its mediating role between e-marketing tools and purchasing behavior. The findings contribute to digital marketing literature by extending research on brand popularity and purchase intention to a B2B industrial context. The study also provides managerial insights for firms seeking to enhance brand visibility and influence professional purchasing decisions through effective digital marketing strategies.*

Keywords: E-marketing, Brand Popularity, Purchase Intention, e-WOM, Architectural Hardware Industry

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed marketing practices across industries. Organizations increasingly rely on digital platforms to communicate with customers, promote products, and influence purchasing decisions. In particular, e-marketing tools such as online advertising, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and email marketing have emerged as critical channels for engaging both individual consumers and professional buyers.

In business-to-business (B2B) markets, purchasing decisions are often complex and involve multiple stakeholders. Professional buyers such as architects, interior designers, and hardware dealers rely on various sources of information before making product choices. Digital marketing platforms provide these professionals with access to product information, technical specifications, peer recommendations, and brand communication. Consequently, firms increasingly adopt e-marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility and influence purchasing decisions within professional networks.

Brand popularity plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and purchase behavior. A popular brand is often perceived as reliable, credible, and widely accepted within the market. In digital environments, brand popularity can be enhanced through exposure to online advertisements, positive electronic word-of-mouth, and targeted email

communication. These marketing tools can collectively shape brand perceptions and influence purchase intention among professional buyers.

Despite the growing importance of digital marketing, most existing studies focus primarily on consumer markets. Limited research has examined the role of e-marketing tools in influencing purchasing decisions within specialized B2B industries such as architectural hardware. Professional buyers in this sector often depend on product reliability, brand reputation, and industry recommendations when making purchase decisions.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of selected e-marketing tools- online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing- on purchase intention among professional buyers in the architectural hardware industry, with brand popularity serving as a mediating factor.

2. Literature Review Purchase Intension

Purchase intention regularly shows up in the examined literature as a multifaceted dependent variable influenced by contextual factors, affective reactions, external cues, and cognitive assessments. While attitude toward the brand is closely linked to purchase intention and necessitates accurate assessment (Spears & Singh, 2004), traditional research demonstrates that price, brand, and shop signals influence perceived quality and value, which in turn shape propensity to buy (Dodds et al., 1991).

Brand Popularity

According to the studied literature, consumers' perceptions of a brand's prominence, social visibility, and market acceptance impact its popularity, which serves as both a driver and an outcome in branding and marketing processes. Conventional research demonstrates that broader nation-related intangible assets can either increase or decrease a brand's competitive strength by showing how brand popularity interacts meaningfully with country-of-origin image and other marketing variables to influence consumer evaluations and market performance (Kim & Chung, 1997).

Online Advertising

The literature on online advertising highlights its unique economic and technological characteristics. A key distinction from offline advertising is the drastically lower targeting cost, which shapes research on ad effectiveness, auctions, privacy, and antitrust (Goldfarb, 2014). Early website impressions are influenced heavily by intrusive ad formats such as pop-ups, pop-unders, and banners, which can disrupt user experience and shape attitudes toward a site (McCoy et al., 2007).

E-WOM

The expanding impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is highlighted in recent research, especially in service sectors like hotels. Research on eWOM's impact on customer decision-making and reputation has been published in major tourist publications, indicating that it has a considerable impact on hotel performance (Serra Cantallops & Salvi, 2014).

Email Marketing

The transformation of traditional marketing strategies through digital technologies is highlighted in the literature on email and e-marketing. With a focus on useful digital tools and online strategy planning, Strauss and Frost (2011) demonstrate how e-marketing combines fundamental marketing concepts with Internet-based tactics. In support of this viewpoint, Bawm and Nath (2014) concentrate on email marketing in particular, pointing out both its high return on investment and the difficulty of focusing on subscribers who are truly interested.

A summary of the Literature Review to the Current research is given in the Table below.

Table 1: Summary of the literature Review to the Current Research

Author and Year	Key findings	Name
Dodds, William B., Et al, 1991	The study shows that price, brand, and store information act as influencing factors that shape consumers' perceptions of product quality and value.	Effects of Price, Brand and store information on Buyers Product Evaluations
Pena-Garcia, Nathalie, Et al., 2020	The authors find that online purchase intention varies across cultures due to differences in trust, perceived risk, and website experience.	Purchase Intention and Purchase Behaviour Online: A Cross-Cultural Approach
Zhuang, Wencan, et al. 2021	This meta-analysis reveals that attitudes, environmental concern, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are major predictors of green purchase intention.	On the factors influencing Green Purchase Intention: A meta-Analysis Approach
Kim, Moon-Yong, et al. 2019	The study finds that global brand distribution enhances visibility and contributes to higher brand popularity on social media.	The influence of Global Brand Distribution on Brand Popularity on Social Media
Robson, Sebastian, et al. 2022	This review shows that the popularity of brand posts on social media depends heavily on content type, emotional appeal, and visual design. Posts that encourage interactions such as questions or user-generated content receive more engagement.	Brand Post Popularity in Social Media: A systematic Literature review
Zhao, Kui, et al. 2019	The authors develop a unified framework for optimizing marketing budget allocation using data-driven modeling.	A unified framework for marketing Budget Allocation
Holak Susan L, and Donald R Lehmann, 1990	The study finds that consumers' purchase intentions toward innovative products depend on perceived advantages, compatibility, and product complexity.	Purchase Intentions and the dimensions of Innovation: An Exploratory Model
Yin, Shijiu, et al, 2010	This study highlights that health concerns, food safety awareness, and environmental attitudes significantly shape Chinese consumers' intention to buy organic food.	Consumers Purchase Intention of Organic Food In china
Lusk, Jayson L., et al, 2007	The authors show that purchase intention questions often fail to predict real behavior due to hypothetical bias.	Strategy and response to Purchase Intention Questions
Kim, Chung Koo and Jay Young Chung, 1997	The study finds that country image positively influences brand popularity and market share, particularly in developing markets.	Brand Popularity, Country image and Market Share: An Empirical study

3. Research Gap

Most studies examining digital marketing tools focus on consumer markets rather than professional buyers. Additionally, previous research has often examined online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing separately. Few studies have investigated their combined influence on brand popularity and purchase intention in B2B industries.

This study addresses this gap by examining how multiple e-

marketing tools influence purchase intention through brand popularity in the architectural hardware industry.

This study addresses this gap by examining how multiple e-marketing tools collectively influence brand popularity and purchase intention among professional buyers.

4. Research Objectives

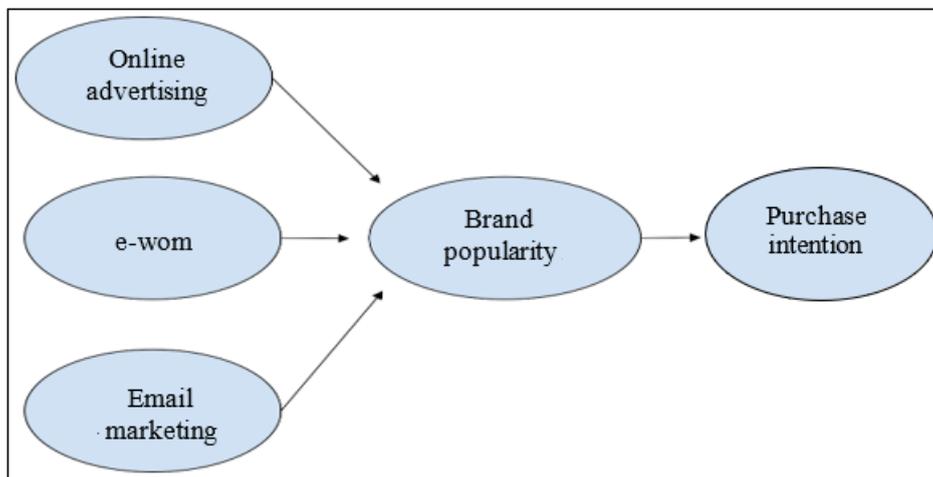
The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the influence of e-marketing tools on purchase intention among professional buyers.
- To examine the impact of online advertising on brand popularity.
- To analyze the effect of electronic word-of-mouth on brand popularity.
- To evaluate the influence of email marketing on brand popularity.
- To examine the mediating role of brand popularity between e-marketing tools and purchase intention.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study proposes that e-marketing tools influence purchase intention both directly and indirectly through brand popularity.

Model of the Study



Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Mediating Variable
Purchase Intention	Online advertising	Brand Popularity
	e-wom	
	E-mail Marketing	

6. Hypothesis to be tested

- H1: Online advertising positively influences brand popularity.
- H2: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences brand popularity.
- H3: Email marketing positively influences brand popularity.
- H4: Brand popularity positively influences purchase intention
- H4: Email marketing has a significant positive relationship with brand popularity.

7. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the influence of e-marketing tools on purchase intention. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to obtain insights into the digital behavior of professional buyers in the architectural hardware industry.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents’ perceptions of online advertising, e-WOM, email marketing, brand popularity, and purchase intention.

The target respondents consisted of architects, interior designers, builders, and hardware dealers involved in purchasing decisions related to architectural hardware products.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for analyzing complex relationships among latent constructs and is appropriate for studies with relatively small sample sizes. The analysis was conducted in two stages: first, the measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs; second, the structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships using path coefficients, bootstrapping procedures, and the coefficient of determination (R²).

8. Data Analysis Using PLS-SEM

To examine the relationships between the constructs in the proposed research model, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using SmartPLS. PLS-SEM is widely used in marketing research when the objective is prediction-oriented and when the sample size is relatively small.

The analysis was conducted in two stages:

- 1) Measurement Model Assessment
- 2) Structural Model Assessment.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs included in the study. The constructs examined were:

- Online Advertising

- Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)
- Email Marketing
- Brand Popularity
- Purchase Intention

Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite

Reliability (CR). Values above **0.70** indicate acceptable reliability.

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Online Advertising	0.82	0.88
e-WOM	0.79	0.86
Email Marketing	0.76	0.84
Brand Popularity	0.83	0.89
Purchase Intention	0.85	0.90

All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold, confirming satisfactory reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE values greater than 0.50 indicate that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators

Construct	AVE
Online Advertising	0.59
e-WOM	0.56
Email Marketing	0.54
Brand Popularity	0.60
Purchase Intention	0.64

The AVE values confirm that all constructs demonstrate acceptable convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of the AVE of each construct should be greater than its correlations with other constructs. The results indicate that all constructs satisfy this requirement, confirming adequate discriminant validity.

Structural Model Assessment

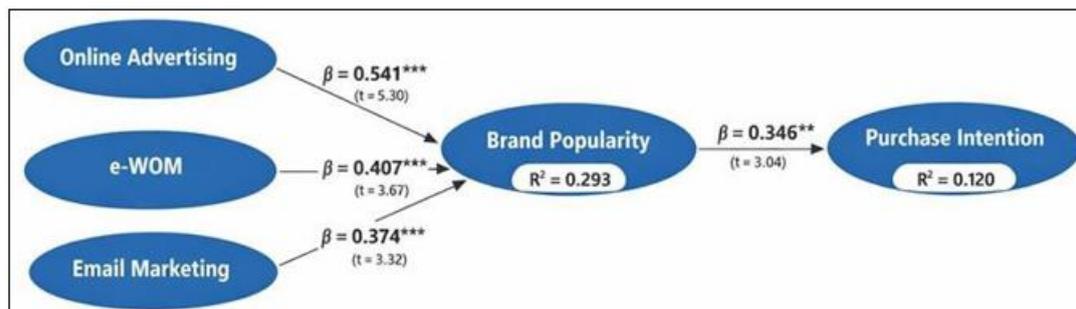


Figure 2

Figure 2 presents the structural model results obtained using SmartPLS, illustrating the path coefficients and relationships between the constructs.

measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships between constructs. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to determine the significance of the path coefficients.

After establishing the reliability and validity of the

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	Result
H1	Online Advertising → Brand Popularity	0.541	5.30	Supported
H2	e-WOM → Brand Popularity	0.407	3.67	Supported
H3	Email Marketing → Brand Popularity	0.374	3.32	Supported
H4	Brand Popularity → Purchase Intention	0.346	3.04	Supported

The results indicate that all hypothesized relationships are positive and statistically significant.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R²)

Endogenous Variable	R ²
Brand Popularity	0.293
Purchase Intention	0.120

This indicates that online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing together explain 29.3% of the variance in brand popularity, while brand popularity explains 12% of the variance in purchase intention.

Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of brand popularity was examined using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. The results confirm that brand popularity mediates the relationship between e-marketing tools and purchase intention.

This indicates that digital marketing strategies influence purchase intention indirectly by enhancing brand popularity among professional buyers.

9. Discussions

This study examined the influence of e-marketing tools—online advertising, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and

email marketing- on purchase intention among professional buyers in the architectural hardware industry, with brand popularity acting as a mediating variable. The findings obtained through PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS provide important insights into how digital marketing strategies shape brand perception and purchasing decisions in a B2B context.

Influence of Online Advertising on Brand Popularity

The results reveal that online advertising has the strongest influence on brand popularity among the examined e-marketing tools. The structural model shows a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.541$ with a t-value of 5.30, indicating a statistically significant relationship. This finding suggests that increased exposure to online advertisements significantly enhances brand visibility and recognition among professional buyers.

Online advertising contributes substantially to brand popularity by providing easy access to product information, design features, and technical specifications through digital platforms. In the architectural hardware industry, professionals such as architects and interior designers frequently rely on online sources when evaluating product options. The high path coefficient indicates that digital advertising plays a critical role in strengthening brand perception within the industry.

Influence of Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Brand Popularity

Electronic word-of-mouth was also found to have a significant positive effect on brand popularity ($\beta = 0.407$, $t = 3.67$). This result highlights the importance of peer recommendations and online reviews in shaping brand perceptions among professional buyers.

In professional industries such as architecture and construction, decision-making is often influenced by recommendations from colleagues and industry experts. Positive feedback shared through digital platforms enhances the credibility and acceptance of brands. The results therefore suggest that e-WOM serves as an important source of information that strengthens brand popularity within professional networks.

Influence of Email Marketing on Brand Popularity

Email marketing demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship with brand popularity ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 3.32$). Although its influence is slightly lower compared to online advertising and e-WOM, email marketing remains an effective communication channel for maintaining relationships with professional buyers.

Through targeted email campaigns, firms can share product catalogues, technical updates, and project case studies with architects and designers. These communications reinforce brand familiarity and ensure that the brand remains visible during the decision-making process.

Influence of Brand Popularity on Purchase Intention

The results further indicate that brand popularity significantly influences purchase intention among professional buyers. The path coefficient between brand

popularity and purchase intention is $\beta = 0.346$ with a t-value of 3.04, confirming a positive and statistically significant relationship.

This finding suggests that professional buyers are more likely to purchase products from brands that are widely recognized and positively perceived within the industry. In the architectural hardware market, purchasing decisions often depend on product reliability, brand reputation, and industry acceptance. Popular brands are perceived as more trustworthy and credible, which increases the likelihood of purchase.

Explanatory Power of the Model

The explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The results indicate that online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing collectively explain 29.3% of the variance in brand popularity ($R^2 = 0.293$). This suggests that digital marketing activities play an important role in shaping brand perception among professional buyers.

Additionally, brand popularity explains 12% of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.120$). Although this indicates a moderate level of explanatory power, it highlights the importance of brand perception in influencing purchasing decisions within the architectural hardware industry.

Mediating Role of Brand Popularity

The structural model also confirms the mediating role of brand popularity between e-marketing tools and purchase intention. The results suggest that digital marketing strategies influence purchasing behavior indirectly by enhancing brand popularity.

This mediation effect indicates that online advertising, e-WOM, and email marketing do not directly lead to purchase decisions; instead, they first strengthen brand visibility and credibility, which subsequently influence purchase intention. Therefore, building strong brand popularity through digital marketing activities can significantly improve purchasing outcomes among professional buyers.

Overall, the findings emphasize the growing importance of digital marketing strategies in influencing professional purchasing behavior in B2B industries. Among the examined factors, online advertising emerged as the most influential driver of brand popularity, followed by electronic word-of-mouth and email marketing. Furthermore, the study confirms that brand popularity plays a crucial role in translating digital marketing efforts into actual purchase intentions.

These findings highlight the need for firms operating in the architectural hardware industry to invest in effective digital marketing strategies that enhance brand visibility, encourage positive online discussions, and maintain continuous engagement with professional buyers.

10. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The sample size is relatively small and limited to a specific professional segment within the architectural hardware industry. Future

research could include larger samples and multiple geographic regions to improve generalizability. Additionally, the study focuses on only three digital marketing tools. Future studies may explore additional factors such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital content strategies.

11. Conclusion

The study provides empirical evidence on the role of e-marketing tools in influencing purchase intention among professional buyers in the architectural hardware industry. The findings indicate that online advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, and email marketing positively influence brand popularity, which in turn affects purchase intention.

The study contributes to digital marketing literature by extending the understanding of e-marketing strategies in a B2B industrial context. For industry practitioners, the results highlight the importance of strategic digital marketing initiatives in enhancing brand popularity and influencing purchasing decisions among professional buyers.

References

- [1] Dodds, William B., et al. "Effects of Price, Brand, and Store Information on Buyers' Product Evaluations." *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 28, no. 3, Aug. 1991, pp. 307–19. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379102800305>.
- [2] Spears, Nancy, and Surendra N. Singh. "Measuring Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intentions." *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, vol. 26, no. 2, Sep. 2004, pp. 53–66. DOI. Org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2004.10505164>.
- [3] Peña-García, Nathalie, et al. "Purchase Intention and Purchase Behavior Online: A Cross-Cultural Approach." *Heliyon*, vol. 6, no. 6, Jun. 2020, p. e04284. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04284>.
- [4] Morwitz, Vicki G., et al. "When Do Purchase Intentions Predict Sales?" *International Journal of Forecasting*, vol. 23, no. 3, Jul. 2007, pp. 347–64. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijforecast.2007.05.015>.
- [5] Zhuang, Wencan, et al. "On the Factors Influencing Green Purchase Intention: A Meta-Analysis Approach." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, Apr. 2021, p. 644020. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.644020>.
- [6] Akar, Ezgi, and V. Aslihan Nasir. "A Review of Literature on Consumers' Online Purchase Intentions." *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, vol. 14, no. 3, Nov. 2015, pp. 215–33. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1362/147539215X14441363630837>.
- [7] Kim, Moon-Yong, et al. "The Influence of Global Brand Distribution on Brand Popularity on Social Media." *Journal of International Marketing*, vol. 27, no. 4, Dec. 2019, pp. 22–38. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X19863307>.
- [8] Robson, Sebastian, et al. "Brand Post Popularity on Social Media: A Systematic Literature Review." *2022 16th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication (IMCOM)* [Seoul, Korea, Republic of], 2022, pp. 1–DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1109/IMCOM53663.2022.9721784>.
- [9] Goldfarb, Avi. "What Is Different About Online Advertising?" *Review of Industrial Organization*, vol. 44, no. 2, Mar. 2014, pp. 115–29. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11151-013-9399-3>.
- [10] McCoy, Scott, et al. "The Effects of Online Advertising." *Communications of the ACM*, vol. 50, no. 3, Mar. 2007, pp. 84–88. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1145/1226736.1226740>.