

# Digital Marketing Strategy and Consumer Purchase Intention

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## Abstract

The emergence of the electronic marketplace has redefined marketing practices. Today, competitiveness is defined by a firm's experience in being tech savvy. Leveraging digital marketing tools is an antecedent to influencing consumer purchase intentions and is gaining traction in many industries. In the face of these developments, limited evidence exists on the adoption and use of technology in the motor vehicle industry. Global trends point to the existence of volatility in the sales of vehicles, hence the need for examining the probable nexus between digital marketing tools and consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the effect of social media marketing, website marketing and search engine optimization on consumer purchase intention. Anchoring on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology, theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model, the study demonstrates the application of these theories in influencing consumer purchase intention. Guided by a cross-sectional survey design, the study targeted 197 registered motor dealers in Nairobi City County. Researchers used a simple random sampling to select 131 respondents. A structured research instrument was

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deployed in data collection and the survey monkey technique was applied to complement the process. A pilot test of the instrument was done, and its validity and reliability were confirmed. A mean scores analysis shows that automobile firms have embraced the use of digital marketing to a great extent. Exploratory factor analysis decomposed the study variables into a three-factor structure. The factors were regressed against the predicted variable and the first two factors had a positive and significant effect while the third factor had a significant but negative effect on the predicted variable. It was deduced that digital marketing tools significantly affected consumer purchase intention; therefore, players in the auto mobile industry should swiftly embrace and invest in digital marketing technologies to excel in the e-market space.

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## **Introduction**

The transition of buyers from the physical market space to the electronic market space (e-market) requires modern firms to shift from being brick-and-mortar organisations to being either pure-play entities or click-and-mortar organisations. As time passes, new technologies are emerging to supplement or substitute business roles more efficiently and expediently. Marketing is one of the most transformed business functions, with more companies integrating digital technologies into their daily operations, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic (Chouhan & Singh, 2021). Digital technologies have transformed marketing communication and how customers interact with their favourite brands (Fawzee et al., 2019). The motor vehicle industry is one of the most concentrated industries in the world, with few registered companies fiercely competing in the same market (Khisa & Kariuki, 2022). According to Al-Kanaani et al. (2021), the vehicle production rate far exceeds purchase capacity in developing nations, and motor industry firms must integrate new marketing technologies to remain competitive.

Marketing activities encompass advertising, selling and delivering products and services to the final purchaser (Desai, 2019). Marketing aims to facilitate targeted communication of a product's qualities to the right people at the right time, in the right place, and with the appropriate language. Digital technologies have emerged as important communication facilitators, and businesses have incorporated them to aid in a wide variety of functions, including marketing (Guenzi & Habel, 2020). Marketing using digital communication tools is referred to as digital marketing.

Today, more customers than ever carry out online searches before narrowing them down to specific purchase options (Ahmed & Zahid, 2014). This phenomenon shows that marketers and digital channels are key in influencing customer purchase decisions. Febrianti et al. (2018) contend that currently, companies are engaging in a radical transformation from traditional marketing patterns to complicated virtual environments powered by Industry 4.0 technologies. Sengupta (2018) argues that digital technologies have increased customer awareness, reducing the time required to make purchase intentions. The study affirms that Swedish dealerships have leveraged extensively on social media and search engines to gain a competitive advantage.

Digital marketing refers to an ever-changing and dynamic process whereby electronic devices market certain products and services (Darma & Noviana, 2020). It involves using any digital platform to manage an online business presence through websites or social media (Jain & Yadav, 2017). Digital marketing differs from traditional marketing in that it facilitates two-way communication between the seller and the consumer, enabling sellers to form an early opinion on how products and services have been received by the market (Kayumovich & Annamuradovna, 2020). Digital marketing tools are multiple and vary. They include using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), email marketing, blogs and websites, content marketing, and social media to market a company's products (Lakshmi. & Sarvamangala, 2019). Nanga (2015) affirms that SEO, social media, and website marketing are among the most employed digital tools.

Three digital marketing tools will be examined in this study: social media marketing, website marketing and SEO. Social media is an internet-based form of communication where users can interact, share conversations and create web content. It leverages internet-enabled devices to turn communication into interactive dialogue (Mesfin, 2019). Website marketing refers to using websites to access, market and interact with clients (Gatobu, 2018). Websites are interactive platforms whereby customers can make queries regarding products, make

immediate comparisons, purchase decisions and finalize the purchase process. Jalang'o (2015) defines SEO as the process of improving a website or a company's online presence by increasing the visibility of its products. Essentially, SEO improves the ranking of a product on a search engine, linking a company's products with organic search results based on website visitors, keywords and search queries. SEO not only increases visibility but also increases brand awareness since it increases the opportunities for customers to discover a certain brand.

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood or willingness to purchase certain items (Nittin, 2015). Purchase intentions reflect a consumer's plan to pay for a good or service and depend on the satisfaction level with use. According to Putri (2017), customers' purchase intention can be identified by several factors such as individual repurchase rate, the tendency to refer certain products and services to prospective buyers, and interest in specific products. Putri (2021) further holds that digital marketing increases brand awareness, which is positively correlated with purchase intention. The growth of social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube has provided sellers with cheap, fast and sustainable ways to share and disseminate information regarding their products and services. Customer purchase intention encompasses various constructs such as consumer attitudes, perceived value, perceived risk, usefulness, and ease of use (Jeon, Sung, & Kim, 2020). Various researchers have explored drivers of online purchase intention by identifying the perceived characteristics of the websites, the products and consumers (Jauhari, 2018). In a study of the sale strategies used by world's leading automotive firms, Lazizovich (2022) reported that leading automotive firms are moving from traditional two-and three-tier direct sales channels to adopting websites, multiple social media channels, and digital company platforms for a complete integrated shopping experience.

In the automobile industry, the Kenya Motor Industry (2020) reports that only 12 percent of the vehicles sold in Kenya are new, with most vehicles arriving from Asian countries. This results in a wide range of sellers offering similarly priced products. According to Kigunda (2017), companies are turning to digital marketing since more consumers are using digital channels, and automotive players can leverage digital channels to become more competitive. However, according to Achieng (2016), usage of digital marketing strategies by Kenyan SMEs is moderate (30%), and these firms lack adequate funds to set up quality websites, have limited knowledge of digital content development, and lack the technical knowhow to manage these strategies.

Benard (2016) opines that there is a dearth of empirical evidence on the integrated marketing communication strategies adopted by second-hand motor dealers in Kenya. Kenya's market is characterized by a wide variety of digital marketing channels. Despite the increased investment into and adoption of digital marketing channels, there is little empirical evidence on applying digital tools to influence consumer purchase of motor vehicles. The current study sought to fill this empirical gap and provide evidence of the nexus between marketing channels and the purchase of high-value products in a highly concentrated market. The study sought to examine the effect of digital marketing tools on customer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. More specifically, the study sought to determine the effect of social media marketing, website marketing and search engine optimization on consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya.

### **Literature Review**

Three theories underpinned the theoretical review: Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model. The UTAUT theory explains user intentions regarding the use of systems and the subsequent usage behaviour. The study used this theory to identify the factors that influence the acceptance and usage of digital channels to make purchases in the motor vehicle industry. The UTAUT was developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) and has been used extensively to explain user intentions to use an information system and how this usage influences subsequent behavioural change. The UTAUT model was chosen for its comprehensiveness and ability to explain consumer decisions. It identifies two direct determinants of usage behaviour (intention and facilitating conditions), three indirect determinants of usage behaviour (effort expectancy, performance expectancy, and social influence) and moderators (age, gender, voluntariness and experience) that influence usage decisions. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a social psychological model that seeks to explain consciously intended behaviours (Xiao, 2020). The TRA proposes that an individual's behaviour is determined by their intention to perform the behaviour, which is, in turn, a function of their attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TAM advances the variables in the TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975); it introduces two new variables that Davis (1989) asserts have a significant impact on individuals' behavioral tendency to use a new technology or system. According to Wu et al. (2011), TAM provides a basis for tracing how external factors influence individuals' beliefs, attitudes and intentions to use new technologies. These factors are perceived usefulness and perceived ease-

of-use (Davis, 1989). This study will use these theories to identify the digital technologies' specific factors influencing usage within the motor vehicle industry.

The empirical review focused on digital marketing tools such as social media marketing tools, website marketing tools and SEO. Social media marketing has been touted as a key driver of consumer purchase intentions, with studies pointing out a relationship between the two. Alalwan (2018) investigated the elements of social media marketing that influence customers' purchase intentions and adduced evidence that social media interactivity was the most significant determinant of the hedonic motivation of the consumer. Khan et al. (2016) explored the extent to which electronic word of mouth, seller-created information and perceived quality influence customer purchase intention and established that customers' trust in sellers' social media and blogging channels and frequency of interactions with sellers influenced their purchase behaviour. Ghafourzay and Parilti (2020) investigated the impact of SMM on customer purchase intention within Afghanistan's telecommunications industry. They deduced that social media marketing dimensions proxied by interaction ability, customization, and electronic word of mouth significantly improve customer inspiration and influence customer purchase intention. However, entertainment value and trendiness elements of SMM had minimal impacts on consumers' purchase intention. Moslehpour et al. (2021) conducted a study on customers who have used the services of GO-JEK company; they noted that social media aspects of entertainment and influencer voice were among the most significant determinants of SMM success. Makau (2021) examined the influence of digital marketing strategies on Kenyan commercial banks' competitive advantage, and found that social media marketing projects improved social interactions, increasing the number of accounts opened and transacted online at all times of the day. This resulted in an increase in returns from digital services.

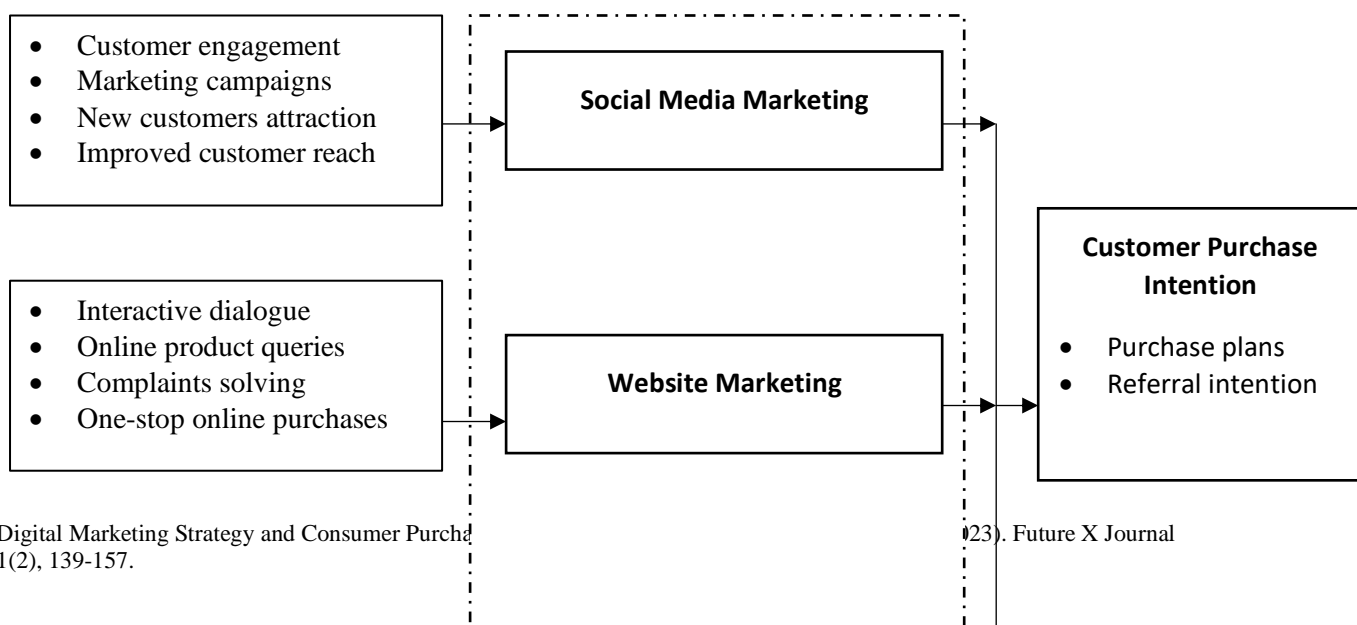
Website marketing is emerging as a major influencer of customer purchase intention (Chang et al., 2014). Chang et al. (2014) concluded that dimensions of web quality encompassing information quality, system quality and service quality and website brand have a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions. Lee et al. (2016) focused on the influence of website quality on youth's purchase intention. They concluded that website accessibility, timeliness, responsiveness, service offering, willingness to attend to consumer requests and privacy assurance are among the main factors companies must consider when designing their websites. Kaushik and Srinivasa (2017) identified website quality, informativeness, interactivity and accessibility as the key influencer of customer retention. Using the self-regulatory process theory, Chi (2018) examined the relationship between website quality, consumer satisfaction

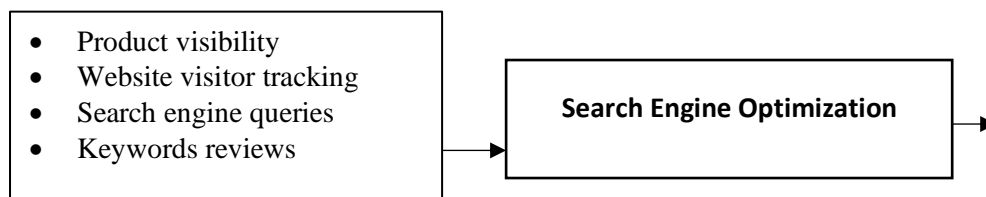
and purchase intention. It was determined that website visual appeal, apparel visual appeal, brand trust, website information quality, and website security as web quality all significantly affected customer satisfaction and purchase intention. In an investigation of the influence of website marketing in the airline industry, Abbasi (2021) observed that website discussion forum was a key channel that facilitated word-of-mouth feedback and discussions and influenced purchase intention.

SEO is an emerging digital marketing strategy whose impact on influencing customer purchase intention has recently attracted much scholarly debate. Wattanawekin (2017) evaluated the impact of SEO on customer behaviour and concluded that SEO was an essential component of online marketing. Wattanawekin found that SEO had a significant impact on customer purchase decisions and it is an important skill set for modern marketers. Using secondary data sources, Lakshmi and Sarvamangala (2019) demonstrated that websites and blogs were among the most adopted digital stores that consumers frequently visited to make comparisons, making them key to influencing the purchasing decision. Using the panel vector autoregressive (VAR) model, Zhao et al. (2018) examined the effect of a Google search on product purchases in the hotel industry and established an increase in the volume of Google searches corresponding positively with an increase in room sales and vice-versa.

### Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework in Figure 1 was drawn from the literature review. It shows digital marketing is categorised into three predictors variables: the social media marketing tools, website marketing tools and search engine optimization tools. The dependent variable for the study was consumer purchase intention. The link between the predictors and the dependent variable is visualized in Figure 1.





**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## Methodology

Guided by a cross-sectional survey approach, the study applied simple random sampling to draw a sample of 131 respondents from a universe of 197 registered motor dealers. Data collection was done systematically to enable the study to answer relevant questions and compare effects (Kothari, 2017). The study relied on primary data to solve the study problem. A survey monkey technique was applied in data collection. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed in line with the research objectives. The research instrument used a five-point Likert scale: 5= strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3= moderately agree, 2 = disagree, 1= strongly disagree.

A validity test of the study instrument was done to determine the accuracy of the research instrument in measuring the intended questions (Field, 2013). The study conducted content validity tests to evaluate whether the research instrument content mirrored the conceptualization adopted. In a two-step content validity test, first, the research supervisor, as an expert in the field, was asked to validate the content and completeness of the questionnaire. Secondly, the instrument was subjected to a face validity test to ascertain whether the study instrument covered the concepts it was supposed to cover. The instrument was given to 14 motor dealers who were asked to identify any problematic, ambiguous, inconsistent or incomplete question. Their feedback was used to improve the final questionnaire, which was then deemed valid. The reliability of the adopted instrument was conducted using the Cronbach Alpha test. The test aimed to analyse the Alpha scores of the study variables. The standard Cronbach Alpha score applied in the study was 0.7. The instrument revealed no major violation, and an overall Cronbach alpha test of the 25 items in the instrument espoused an  $\alpha = 0.951$ , implying the instrument was reliable (Taherdoost, 2016). Frequency analysis was employed in profiling the respondents, and mean score analysis was applied to rank the items comprising a variable in descending order. The study applied explanatory factor analysis in decomposing the



many variables and extracting a few underlying factors. Multiple linear regression was then used to estimate the strength and significance of the relationship between digital marketing tools and customer purchase intention.

### Analysis and Findings

The three predictors – social media marketing tools, website marketing tools and SEO tools and the predicted variable (customer purchase intention) – were subjected to a reliability test to establish their internal consistency. All the variables under study yielded Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7. Should the item be deleted from the analysis as shown in Table 1, then the key constructs under study were internally consistent and reliable (Field, 2013).

**Table 1: Internal Validity Test**

Variable	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Social Media Marketing	64.2136	105.777	0.893	0.819
Website Marketing	67.2621	94.333	0.778	0.871
Search Engine	65.8252	102.695	0.781	0.860
Consumer Purchase	72.5825	135.344	0.702	0.898

A demographic profile of the respondent shows that most of the motor dealers (42.7%) were aged from 36 to 45 years, and have over 10 years of experience in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya. The longevity of the business life indicates the industry's attractiveness and the business prowess of the elements under study.

The post-Covid-19 pandemic experience shows that the motor vehicle industry players in Kenya have adopted digital marketing strategies such as social media marketing (SMM), website marketing, and SEO to influence customer purchase intentions. A cross-tabulation shows most of the older firms (aged over 10 years) were leveraging social media platforms as a central tenet in customer segmentation and market reach.

A mean score analysis ranked the key SMM approaches: SMM in customer segmentation (mean=4.51), boosting of social media posts to expand market reach (mean =4.40), and conducting promotions and advertisements on social media platforms (mean=4.38).

The mean scores of website marketing revealed three key tools: the use of websites to advance product placement and promotion to a wider market segment (mean=3.89), the use of interactive websites for customer support (mean=3.89), and the use of the website to post new content on the range of products offering (mean=3.86).

The mean score analysis of SEO with the highest mean was as follows: user search queries of products applied to optimize online service offering (mean score=4.19); regular updates on content to enhance firm relevancy on online ranking (means score=4.14); on website visitor tracking used to gather information on product popularity (mean score=4.04) and the firm utilizes competitive link analysis to improve our optimization against other competitors in the industry (mean score=4.03).

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Digital Marketing Tools**

Digital Marketing Element	Minimum	Maxi.	Mean	Std. Deviatio
Use of SMM in customer segmentation	3.00	5.00	4.5146	0.62409
Boosting social media posts to expand market reach	3.00	5.00	4.4078	0.75973
Conducting promotions and advertisements on social media platforms	3.00	5.00	4.3883	0.76994
Use of websites to advance product placement and promotion to a wider market segment	2.00	5.00	3.8932	0.87349
Use of interactive websites for customer support	2.00	5.00	3.8932	0.79104
Use of the website to post new content on the range of products offered	2.00	5.00	3.8641	0.91874
User search queries of products applied to optimize online service offering	3.00	5.00	4.1942	0.86385
Regular updates on content to enhance firm relevancy on online ranking	2.00	5.00	4.1456	0.94358
On website visitor tracking used to gather information on product popularity	3.00	5.00	4.0485	0.71919
Use of competitive link analysis to improve optimization against other competitors	3.00	5.00	4.0388	0.76597

Factor analysis was applied to decompose the many variables that comprised digital marketing tools and extract the key components of the underlying factors. While the initial conception of the study was that three critical factors comprised digital marketing tools, Exploratory Factor

Analysis (EFA) was employed to determine the structure of factors (components) and their factor loadings that defined digital marketing tools in the motor vehicle industry. EFA was used to clarify the matrix of correlations by determining a few factors with the strongest influence on consumer purchase intentions (Kiboro et al., 2020). In this study, EFA was applied in a four-step procedure comprising a pretest to evaluate the suitability of the data for factor examination, factor extraction (as an initial solution), factor rotation, and factor interpretation.

As a pretest of EFA, Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of adequacy of sampling were applied. A KMO value of 0.873 was extracted. In reference to the Cerny and Kaiser (1977) rule that KMO values greater than or equal to 0.7 means the data set is acceptable, the current data set on digital marketing tools was deemed fit for use under EFA.

Bartlett's test of the strength of association amongst the digital marketing variables resulted in a sig. value=0.000, which denoted that the elements comprising digital marketing in the correlation matrix were not correlated, and the data were good for EFA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The study employed a two-front approach in factor extraction; first, the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) technique or unrotated solution was derived and then the rotated solution was extracted using the Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation technique. Using the initial Eigenvalues, the 18 digital marketing components cumulatively explained 75.5% of the variations in consumer purchase intentions, leaving only 24.5% unexplained. About the extractions sums of squared loadings, component 1 explained 59.767%, component 2 explained 11.316% and component three explained 1.335% of the variations in consumer purchase intention. This meant that component 1 was a critical determinant of consumer purchase intention. Using a graphical scree plot, the study further affirmed that the three components identified under total variance explained analysis were critical ingredients of digital marketing strategy in the automobile industry.

In the second step, the unrotated component matrix of digital marketing components resulted in 5 components with 18 items loaded in total. The results indicate that all 18 items were initially loaded on component 1. Components 2, 3, 4, and 5 equal attracted factor loadings but whose values were largely less than 0.5. Citing the lack of consensus in the literature on the

limit point for factor loading, Matsunaga (2010) recommends using a 0.4 cut-off. The rampant cross-loading of factors necessitated factor rotation to elucidate the components not explained by the first extraction.

The digital marketing tools under study were subjected to factor rotation using a Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation technique. Coefficients having absolute values greater than 0.4 were retained. The initial 18 items in the research instrument were regrouped into three components. Component 1 had six items loaded on it, and the items with the highest factor loadings were ‘use of the interactive website that allows customers to post queries and review other customers' posts (0.836), ‘use of interactive websites supports the firm in maintaining a one-stop shopping experience for our customers’ (0.768), and ‘regular review of complaints (0.756). The six items under component 1 were interpreted as the factor of *website marketing*.

Component 2 attracted six items, where the items with the highest factor loadings were ‘regular updates of content to enhance the relevancy and firms online ranking’ (0.889), ‘use of keyword review to formulate and publish relevant marketing content among top search engines’ (0.840), and ‘the use of competitive link analysis to improve optimization against other competitors’ (0.815). The six items under component 2 were collated and interpreted as the factor *search engine optimization*.

Component 3 had six items loaded on it. The items with the highest factor loading on this component were ‘boosting of social media posts to expand market reach’(0.866), ‘conducting promotions and advertisements on social media platforms’ (0.859) and ‘use of social media reviews to gather information on how existing/potential customers perceive the firms service offering’ (0.771). The six items under component 3 were interpreted as the factor *social media marketing*.

From the EFA analysis, a three-factor structure comprising social media marketing tools, website marketing tools and SEO tools was derived. The output in Table 4.15 shows that Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the factor social media marketing was  $\alpha=0.882$ , website marketing,  $\alpha=0.907$ , and SEO,  $\alpha=0.908$ . This meant that the internal construct validity for each of the three factors was met, and hence the three variables that comprise digital marketing tools in the study were reliable (Field, 2013).

**Table 3: Extract of the Rotated Component Matrix**

Component	Number of Items	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
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1	6	Website marketing	0.907
2	6	Search engine optimization	0.908
3	6	Social media marketing	0.882

### 1. Effect of Digital Marketing Tools on Customer Purchase Intention

The three factors extracted from the EFA process were subjected to multiple regression analysis (MRA). The study adopted the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation method to extract a regression line of best fit. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality resulted in non-significant p-values  $> 0.05$ , and the null hypothesis that the data were not normally distributed was not rejected. A test of multicollinearity using the VIF and Tolerance resulted in collinearity diagnostics values less than 5, which were considered free of a multicollinearity problem. The Breusch-Pagan test was employed in checking for homoscedasticity. The resulting sig. value = 0.08 was greater than 0.05. Thus, the dataset had no problem of heteroscedasticity; instead, it was homoscedastic and considered adequate for regression analysis. Descriptive analysis was applied to determine extreme scores with no violation recorded.

The variables that comprised the digital marketing construct were regressed against consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya and the following hypotheses were tested;

H<sub>01</sub>: Social media marketing has no significant effect on consumer purchase intention

H<sub>02</sub>: Website marketing has no significant effect on consumer purchase intention

H<sub>03</sub>: Search engine optimization has no significant effect on consumer purchase intention

The MRA resulted in a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )=0.806, interpreted to mean the model could predict 80.6% of the variations in customer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya, providing a perfect fit. The ANOVA output sig-value = 0.000 meant that the model predictors were significant in explaining the linear relationship between the three predictors and customer purchase intention.

**Table 4: Coefficients of Digital Marketing**

Elements of Model 1	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	0.270	0.218		1.240	0.218

Social media marketing	0.727	0.105	0.686	6.951	0.000
Website marketing	-0.210	0.075	-0.251	-2.792	0.006
Search engine optimization	0.454	0.061	0.489	7.405	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer purchase intention

The outcome of the MRA in table 4, was used to derive the fitted model in equation (2)

$$Y = 0.270 + 0.727X_1 - 0.210X_2 + 0.454X_3 \quad \text{equation (2)}$$

In equation (2), Y = consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya, 0.270 = the model intercept, X<sub>1</sub> = social media marketing, X<sub>2</sub> = website marketing, X<sub>3</sub> = search engine optimization. The fitted model shows that in the absence of digital marketing tools, the performance of the motor vehicle industry in Kenya would be 0.270. Social media marketing tools had the highest effect on influencing consumer purchase intention, where a unit change in social media marketing tools would result in a 72.7% positive change in consumer purchase intention. SEO had the second highest effect on consumer purchase intention, where a unit change would result in a 45.4% positive change. Website marketing had the third highest effect on consumer purchase intention, where a unit change would result in a 21.0% negative change. Resulting from the fitted model, the study deduced that digital marketing tools had a significant effect on influencing consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya, and the key driver of the digital marketing strategy is the use of social media marketing tools.

## 2. Findings and Conclusions

Based on EFA, the study extracted three factors related to digital marketing that could affect the consumer purchase intention. Using regression analysis, the study identified three variables comprising digital marketing as having a significant effect on consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya.

The element of digital marketing with the strongest positive effect on consumer purchase intentions was social media marketing. The elements of social media marketing that play a critical role in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya include the use of social media platforms for customer segmentation, the use of social media platforms to enhance market reach, the use of social media platforms to boost its social media posts and conducting promotions and advertisements on social media platforms.

The second element of digital marketing with the highest influence on consumer purchase intentions was SEO. The key items that defined the use of SEO in motor vehicle industry in Kenya include were the use of SEO to boost social media posts to expand its geographical

market, the use of SEO to regularly conduct promotions and advertisements and the use of SEO to gather information on how existing/potential customers perceive their service offering.

The third element of digital marketing had a negative but significant effect on consumer purchase intentions and was identified as website marketing. The critical components with the highest thrust on website marketing in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya included having an interactive website that allows customers to post queries and review other customers' posts, an interactive website that supports a one-stop shopping experience for customers, and regular review of the complaints submitted on the website to improve engagement and solving of customer problems.

The study concludes that digital marketing tools significantly influence consumer purchase intention in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya, and the key drivers of digital marketing strategy comprise social media marketing tools, SEO and website marketing successively.

### **3. Recommendations**

The study recommends that automobile dealers and motor company management embrace digital marketing tools to gain a competitive advantage locally and globally. Players in the automobile sector must leverage the power of social media platforms to increase their market reach and positively influence customer purchase intentions. Managers have to incorporate digital strategies in their marketing plans to achieve growth in performance and firm objectives. Policy formulators should encourage the use of digital marketing tools due to their proven positive influence on the growth of the automobile sector and hence economic growth. Policymakers must study how digital marketing communication can influence growth within the industry and facilitate sector-wide success. Finally, it is recommended that marketing scholars should leverage the new marketplace - the digital space in terms of its opportunities and potential influence on business performance.

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