



Digital Marketing Effectiveness, Perceived Trust, and Yamaha Motorcycle Purchase Decisions

Yenni Daud^{1*}, Johannes Baptista Halik², Kordiana Sambara³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Kristen Indonesia Paulus

Jl. Perintis Kemerdekaan No.Km.13, Daya, Kec. Tamalanrea, Kota Makassar, Indonesia

Author's e-mail: yennidaud23@gmail.com*

*Corresponding author

Abstract – This study addresses the growing challenge of converting digital marketing exposure into actual purchasing decisions in the motorcycle industry, where consumer trust remains a critical issue. The research focuses on the role of perceived trust in linking digital marketing activities with Yamaha motorcycle purchase decisions. The objective of this study is to examine how digital marketing contributes to purchasing decisions through the mediation of perceived trust. A quantitative approach was employed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) based on data collected from 80 Yamaha motorcycle users in Makassar through an online questionnaire. The results indicate that digital marketing significantly strengthens perceived trust, while perceived trust plays a decisive role in shaping purchasing decisions. The direct relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions is weak; however, digital marketing indirectly contributes to purchasing decisions through perceived trust, indicating a full mediation effect. These findings highlight that trust-oriented digital marketing strategies are essential for influencing consumer purchasing behavior in high-involvement products.

Keywords: digital marketing, perceived trust, purchase decision, consumer behavior, motorcycle industry.

Abstrak – Penelitian ini membahas tantangan yang semakin meningkat dalam mengonversi paparan pemasaran digital menjadi keputusan pembelian aktual di industri sepeda motor, di mana kepercayaan konsumen masih menjadi isu yang krusial. Penelitian ini berfokus pada peran perceived trust dalam menghubungkan aktivitas pemasaran digital dengan keputusan pembelian sepeda motor Yamaha. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji bagaimana pemasaran digital berkontribusi terhadap keputusan pembelian melalui mediasi perceived trust. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan metode Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) berdasarkan data yang dikumpulkan dari 80 pengguna sepeda motor Yamaha di Makassar melalui kuesioner daring. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran digital secara signifikan memperkuat perceived trust, sementara perceived trust berperan penting dalam membentuk keputusan pembelian. Hubungan langsung antara pemasaran digital dan keputusan pembelian tergolong lemah; namun demikian, pemasaran digital secara tidak langsung memengaruhi keputusan pembelian melalui perceived trust, yang menunjukkan adanya efek mediasi penuh. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa strategi pemasaran digital yang berorientasi pada pembangunan kepercayaan sangat penting dalam memengaruhi perilaku pembelian konsumen pada produk dengan tingkat keterlibatan tinggi.

Kata kunci: pemasaran digital, perceived trust, keputusan pembelian, perilaku konsumen, industri sepeda motor.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology in the digital era has fundamentally transformed business practices, particularly in marketing activities. Digital transformation has changed how companies communicate value, interact with consumers, and influence purchasing behavior through online platforms (Baharsah & Munawaroh, 2025). Advances in internet access, social media, and mobile technologies have encouraged consumers to rely increasingly on digital channels for information search, product evaluation, and purchasing decisions without direct physical interaction (J. Halik et al., 2021; Santoso et al., 2020). As a result, companies are required to adopt adaptive and innovative marketing strategies to remain competitive in a highly dynamic digital environment.



Digital marketing has emerged as a strategic approach that enables firms to promote products and services through digital media while fostering interactive communication with consumers (HALIK et al., 2023; J. B. Halik & Halik, 2024). This approach allows companies to reach broader markets without geographical or temporal limitations and provides real-time feedback regarding consumer responses. Beyond increasing market exposure, digital marketing also plays a critical role in strengthening long-term relationships by delivering relevant, creative, and engaging content (Islamy & Mandasari, 2024; A. S. Londong et al., 2024). However, in an increasingly competitive marketplace, digital marketing effectiveness is not solely determined by exposure intensity but by how such strategies shape consumer perceptions and psychological responses, particularly trust (Habibi et al., 2023; J. B. Halik, Halik, et al., 2026).

In Indonesia's motorcycle industry, competition among manufacturers has intensified, compelling firms to refine their digital communication strategies. Yamaha, as one of the leading motorcycle brands in Indonesia, faces challenges not only in product differentiation and pricing but also in conveying product value through digital platforms (Farisanu et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2013; Tallamma et al., 2025). Modern consumers, especially younger generations, actively utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube as primary sources of information during the decision-making process (Kotler et al., 2019). Consequently, Yamaha is required to align its digital marketing strategies with current consumer preferences by presenting credible, informative, and engaging digital content that supports purchasing decisions.

Trust, or perceived trust, represents a crucial psychological factor in consumer purchasing behavior. Trust reflects consumers' beliefs regarding a brand's honesty, reliability, and ability to fulfill its promises (Aydın & Gürkaynak Gürbüzler, 2025; Latiep et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). In digital marketing contexts, trust becomes particularly important due to the absence of direct physical interaction between consumers and products. Consumers rely heavily on digital information provided by companies; therefore, transparency, consistency, and credibility of online content significantly influence trust formation. When digital messages are perceived as reliable, consumer trust increases, whereas misleading or exaggerated content may lead to hesitation and purchase avoidance (Sahabuddin et al., 2024). This condition positions perceived trust as a key mechanism linking digital marketing activities to purchasing decisions (Zalni et al., 2023).

Despite extensive implementation of digital marketing strategies, not all consumers proceed to purchase decisions after digital exposure. Many remain hesitant, especially when evaluating high-involvement products such as motorcycles, which involve substantial financial and functional considerations (Habibi et al., 2023). This phenomenon suggests that digital marketing alone does not automatically translate into purchasing decisions without sufficient trust. Consumers in the digital era tend to be more critical and selective, emphasizing brand credibility and reliability as essential determinants of purchase behavior. However, empirical studies examining how perceived trust mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions in the Indonesian motorcycle industry remain limited.

Grounded in Consumer Behavior Theory, which posits that purchasing decisions are influenced by psychological, social, and marketing-related stimuli (Kotler, 2018; J. P. Londong, 2024), this study addresses the existing research gap by examining the role of perceived trust in connecting digital marketing with purchasing decisions. By focusing on Yamaha motorcycle consumers in Makassar, this study contributes empirically by clarifying the mechanism through which digital marketing strategies translate into consumer purchasing behavior. The findings are expected to provide both academic insights into consumer trust formation and practical implications for designing trust-oriented digital marketing strategies in high-involvement product markets.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations: Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework and Trust Formation in Digital Marketing

This study is primarily grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework (S–O–R), which provides a robust theoretical basis for explaining how external marketing stimuli influence internal psychological states and subsequent behavioral responses. The S–O–R framework posits that environmental stimuli (S) trigger internal cognitive and affective evaluations within individuals (O), which then lead to

observable behavioral outcomes (R) (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974; Vieira, 2013). In the context of digital marketing, this framework is particularly relevant due to the mediated nature of consumer–brand interactions and the high level of information uncertainty present in online environments (Stephen, 2016).

Within this study, digital marketing is conceptualized as the external stimulus that exposes consumers to brand-related information through digital platforms such as social media, websites, and online advertisements (Stephen, 2016). These stimuli are not merely informational but also persuasive, as they shape consumers' perceptions regarding the credibility and reliability of the brand. The organism component is represented by perceived trust, which reflects the internal evaluative state through which consumers interpret and assess the quality, transparency, and consistency of digital marketing messages (Eroglu et al., 2001). Trust functions as a critical psychological mechanism that reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, particularly in high-involvement purchasing contexts where direct product evaluation is limited. Finally, the response component is operationalized as the purchase decision, which represents the consumer's behavioral outcome following the evaluation process (Jacoby, 2002).

To further strengthen the explanatory power of the model, this study also draws on advertising effectiveness theory, which emphasizes that the impact of marketing communication depends not only on exposure but on how messages are processed and evaluated by consumers (Handelman & Arnold, 1999). Effective digital marketing must therefore deliver clear, credible, and engaging content that enhances consumers' cognitive processing and fosters favorable attitudes toward the brand (Dwivedi et al., 2021; J. B. Halik, Halik, et al., 2026). In parallel, information processing theory supports the argument that consumers actively interpret marketing stimuli through internal cognitive mechanisms, where trust emerges as a key evaluative construct that determines whether marketing messages are accepted or rejected (Vieira, 2013).

Compared to general consumer behavior theories, the integration of the S–O–R framework with trust formation and advertising effectiveness perspectives offers a more precise and mechanism-based explanation of how digital marketing influences purchasing decisions. Specifically, it clarifies that the effectiveness of digital marketing does not lie solely in increasing exposure, but in its ability to shape internal psychological states, particularly trust, which ultimately drives consumer behavior. This theoretical integration provides a strong foundation for examining the mediating role of perceived trust in the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decisions, especially in the context of high-involvement products such as motorcycles.

Digital Marketing: Concept and Role in Shaping Consumer Perceptions

Digital marketing encompasses all marketing activities conducted through electronic channels—such as social media, search engines, and online advertising—aimed at engaging consumers and influencing their purchase behavior (J. B. Halik, Lambe, et al., 2026; Kotler et al., 2019). This approach has become dominant in contemporary marketing due to its ability to reach extensive audiences, provide interactive content, and tailor messages based on consumer behavior analytics (Alvionita et al., 2025).

Prior research indicates that digital marketing efforts can enhance consumer engagement and information processing, thereby influencing cognitive and affective responses that precede purchase decisions. However, the direct impact of digital marketing on purchase decisions is often inconsistent without sufficient psychological triggers such as perceived trust (Salman & Prasetyo, 2025).

Perceived Trust: Definition and Operationalization

Perceived trust is defined as the consumer's belief in the credibility, reliability, and integrity of a brand or platform within online interactions. In digital marketplaces, trust functions to reduce perceived uncertainty and risk, which are inherent when consumers cannot physically evaluate products prior to purchase (Hidayat et al., 2021). Empirical research shows that trust significantly influences purchase decisions by providing reassurance that digital promises will be fulfilled, thereby facilitating commitment to transaction behaviors (Salman & Prasetyo, 2025).

Operationally, perceived trust in this research is measured as consumers' confidence in the authenticity, consistency, and transparency of digital marketing content and online brand presence (Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2021; Zhang et al., 2024).

Digital Marketing, Trust, and Purchase Decisions: Empirical Evidence

Recent quantitative studies reveal a consistent pattern: digital marketing positively affects perceived trust, which in turn enhances purchase decisions. Murtiasih (2025) study in the coffee shop context shows that social media marketing and online advertising significantly increase brand trust, and brand trust positively affects purchase decisions; yet direct digital marketing effects are often observed only through the trust pathway.

Similarly, research in consumer goods settings demonstrates that digital marketing cannot always directly predict purchase decisions unless trust is established as a mediator (Hidayat et al., 2021; Tallamma et al., 2025). Findings from these contexts reinforce the argument that, particularly for high-involvement products such as motorcycles, trust must be elevated through credible digital content before consumers commit to a purchase.

In a complementary study, Salman & Prasetyo (2025) found that social media marketing enhances purchase decisions through brand trust, where informativeness and interactivity strengthen consumer perceptions of reliability in brand messages.

Synthesis and Development of Hypotheses

Digital Marketing Effectiveness and Perceived Trust

Previous studies have demonstrated that digital marketing enhances consumer trust by improving information transparency and perceived credibility (Hidayat et al., 2021; Salman & Prasetyo, 2025). Digital interactions allow firms to communicate consistent and reliable information, which strengthens consumers' confidence in the brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁ : Digital Marketing Effectiveness positively influences Perceived Trust.

Perceived Trust and Purchasing Decision

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that perceived trust plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchase decisions, particularly in digital environments characterized by information asymmetry and uncertainty (Hidayat et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2024). Trust reduces perceived risk and enhances consumers' confidence in the credibility and reliability of the brand, thereby facilitating commitment to purchasing behavior. Empirical evidence further indicates that when consumers perceive a brand as trustworthy, they are more likely to proceed from evaluation to actual decision-making, especially in high-involvement product categories (Habibi et al., 2023; Salman & Prasetyo, 2025). In this context, trust functions not merely as a cognitive evaluation but as a decisive mechanism that transforms intention into action. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂ : Perceived Trust positively influences Purchase Decision.

Digital Marketing Effectiveness and Purchasing Decision

Prior research suggests that digital marketing has the potential to directly influence consumer purchase decisions by providing accessible, informative, and persuasive content that supports product evaluation and preference formation (Dwivedi et al., 2021; J. B. Halik & Halik, 2024). Through digital channels, firms can deliver targeted messages that shape consumer perceptions and encourage behavioral responses. However, empirical findings regarding this direct relationship remain mixed, particularly in high-involvement product contexts where consumers require stronger psychological assurance before committing to a purchase (Habibi et al., 2023; Tallamma et al., 2025). Despite these inconsistencies, digital marketing is still expected to exert a direct influence on purchase decisions, although the strength of this effect may vary depending on contextual factors.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃ : Digital Marketing Effectiveness positively influences Purchase Decision.

Mediating Effect of Perceived Trust

A growing body of literature emphasizes that the effectiveness of digital marketing is not solely determined by its direct influence on consumer behavior, but rather by its ability to shape internal

psychological states, particularly trust (Eroglu et al., 2001; Stephen, 2016). Within the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework, digital marketing acts as an external stimulus that influences consumers’ internal evaluations, where perceived trust emerges as a key organismic response that reduces uncertainty and enhances decision confidence (Vieira, 2013). Empirical studies have demonstrated that digital marketing often affects purchase decisions indirectly through trust, especially in contexts involving high perceived risk and information complexity (Hidayat et al., 2021; Salman & Prasetyo, 2025). This suggests that trust serves as a critical mediating mechanism that translates digital marketing efforts into actual purchasing behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄ : Perceived Trust mediates the relationship between Digital Marketing Effectiveness and Purchase Decision.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical findings discussed in the previous sections, this study proposes a conceptual framework that explains the relationships among digital marketing, perceived trust, and purchase decisions. Consumer Behavior Theory suggests that marketing stimuli influence internal consumer evaluations before leading to behavioral outcomes. In digital environments, these evaluations are strongly shaped by perceived trust, which functions as a key psychological mechanism in reducing uncertainty and facilitating decision-making. Accordingly, the proposed framework positions digital marketing as an external stimulus that shapes perceived trust, which subsequently influences consumers’ purchase decisions. The framework also allows for the examination of both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs in order to capture the mediating role of perceived trust. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework tested in this study.

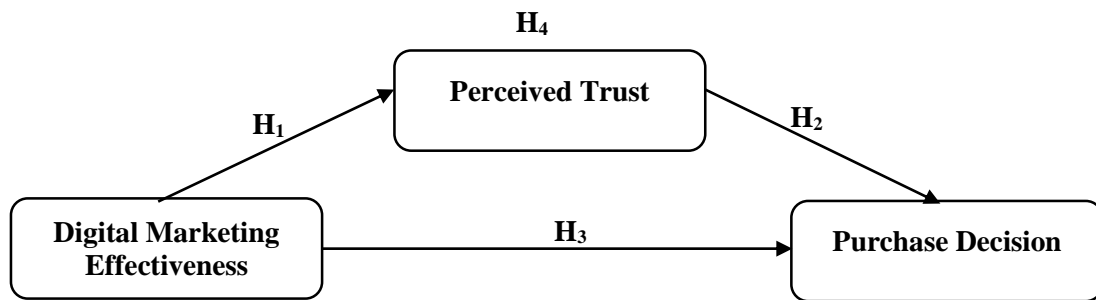


Figure 1. Conceptual framework
Source: Author’s personal conception (2026)

Measurement Items

To ensure construct validity and eliminate potential response bias, all measurement items were carefully refined to avoid double-barrelled statements and to reflect distinct conceptual dimensions. Each indicator was designed to capture a single aspect of the construct, thereby improving measurement precision and interpretability.

Furthermore, the operationalization of digital marketing in this study is structured around three key dimensions: informativeness, interactivity, and content consistency, which are widely recognized as critical determinants of effective digital communication and trust formation in online environments. This dimensional approach allows for stronger alignment between measurement indicators and the study’s practical implications.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The operationalization of digital marketing in this study is not limited to general exposure, but reflects specific qualitative attributes of digital communication, namely clarity of information (DM1, DM3), accessibility (DM2), interactivity (DM4), and cross-platform consistency (DM5). These attributes are conceptually linked to trust formation, as they represent key elements through which consumers evaluate the credibility and reliability of digital marketing content. Therefore, the measurement items provide a sufficient empirical basis for deriving practical recommendations related to transparency, consistency, and interactive engagement in digital marketing strategies.

Table 1. Measurement indicators

Variable	Code	Measurement Indicators	Source
Digital Marketing Effectiveness	DM1	Yamaha's digital marketing provides complete product information through online media.	(Alvionita et al., 2025; HALIK et al., 2023; J. B. Halik, Halik, et al., 2026; Islamy & Mandasari, 2024; Tamara et al., 2023)
	DM2	Yamaha's digital marketing content is easy to access via digital platforms.	
	DM3	Digital marketing messages are presented clearly.	
	DM4	Yamaha's digital marketing content is interactive.	
	DM5	Digital marketing information is consistent across different online platforms.	
Perceived Trust	PT1	Yamaha provides reliable information through its digital marketing channels.	(Aydın & Gürkaynak Gürbüz, 2025; Latiep et al., 2023; Sahabuddin et al., 2024; Zalni et al., 2023)
	PT2	I trust the accuracy of information presented in Yamaha's digital marketing.	
	PT3	Yamaha's digital marketing reflects transparency.	
	PT4	Yamaha's digital marketing increases my confidence in the brand.	
	PT5	Yamaha delivers on the promises communicated in its digital marketing.	
Purchase Decision	PD1	Digital marketing information helps me recognize my purchasing needs.	(Habibi et al., 2023; J. Halik et al., 2021; Kotler et al., 2019; Murtiasih, 2025; Tamara et al., 2023)
	PD2	Digital marketing information supports my evaluation of Yamaha motorcycles.	
	PD3	Digital marketing influences my preference for Yamaha motorcycles.	
	PD4	I feel confident in making a purchase decision after accessing digital marketing content.	
	PD5	Digital marketing contributes to my final purchase decision.	

Source: Adapted from previous research (2026)

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach to examine the relationships among digital marketing, perceived trust, and purchase decisions. A quantitative design was considered appropriate because the study aims to test hypothesized relationships between latent variables using numerical data and statistical analysis. The explanatory nature of the research allows for an assessment of both direct and indirect effects among variables, particularly to capture the mediating role of perceived trust in the proposed research model (Hair et al., 2021).

The population of this study consisted of Yamaha motorcycle users in Makassar, Indonesia, who had been exposed to Yamaha's digital marketing content through online platforms such as social media and official websites. Makassar was selected as the research location due to its status as one of the major urban centers in Eastern Indonesia with a high level of motorcycle usage and active digital media engagement. Data collection was conducted over a two-month period, from October to December 2025, to ensure adequate response rates and data completeness.

The sampling technique applied in this study was purposive sampling, which allows researchers to select respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Memon et al., 2025). The criteria included respondents who (1) owned or used Yamaha motorcycles, (2) had previously accessed Yamaha digital marketing content, and (3) had made or considered a purchase decision based on digital information. A total of 80 valid responses were obtained and analyzed. This sample size meets the minimum requirement for Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for small to medium sample sizes and complex research models (Hair et al., 2021).

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online. All measurement items were adapted from prior validated studies to ensure content validity and relevance to the research context. Digital marketing was measured through indicators related to informativeness, interactivity, and content quality; perceived trust was measured through indicators reflecting credibility, reliability, and transparency;

and purchase decision was measured based on evaluation and decision commitment. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), which is commonly used in behavioral research to capture respondents' perceptions consistently (Sugiyono, 2020).

The data analysis technique employed in this study was Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), using Smart-PLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its ability to simultaneously assess measurement and structural models, as well as its robustness in handling non-normal data distributions and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019; Haryono, 2017). The analysis procedure involved two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model to assess validity and reliability, followed by evaluation of the structural model to test hypothesized relationships. The mediating effect of perceived trust was examined using bootstrapping procedures to determine the significance of indirect effects (Hair et al., 2019; Santosa, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of respondents provide an initial overview of the sample profile and help to contextualize the empirical findings. A total of 80 valid respondents participated in this study, all of whom were Yamaha motorcycle users in Makassar. The demographic distribution indicates that the majority of respondents were male, reflecting the general composition of motorcycle users in urban areas. In terms of occupational background, most respondents were students, followed by employees and business owners. Furthermore, the majority of respondents had previously purchased a motorcycle, indicating that the data were obtained from individuals with relevant purchasing experience. Table 2 presents a summary of respondent characteristics.

Table 2. Respondent characteristics (n = 80)

Characteristics	Category	Amount (persons)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	57.5
	Female	34	42.5
Occupation	Students	60	75.0
	Employees	8	10.0
	Business owners	12	15.0
Purchase Experience	Yes	67	83.8
	No	13	16.2

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

The dominance of respondents with prior purchasing experience strengthens the relevance of the data, as respondents were capable of evaluating digital marketing exposure, trust perceptions, and actual purchasing decisions.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis is conducted to provide an initial overview of the distribution and central tendencies of the collected data (Santosa, 2018). This analysis allows researchers to summarize respondents' perceptions toward each measurement indicator through key statistical measures such as the mean and standard deviation. The mean value reflects the average level of respondents' agreement with each statement, while the standard deviation indicates the degree of variation in respondents' responses. In behavioral research, descriptive statistics are useful for understanding general response patterns and ensuring that the data exhibit reasonable variability prior to conducting more advanced statistical analyses such as structural equation modeling.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 3 provide insight into how respondents evaluate each measurement indicator associated with the constructs of digital marketing, perceived trust, and purchase decision. By linking the statistical results with the operational indicators used in the questionnaire, the interpretation offers a clearer understanding of respondents' perceptions regarding Yamaha's digital marketing activities and their influence on consumer decision-making.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
DM1	3.925	0.985
DM2	3.900	1.011
DM3	3.712	1.009
DM4	3.650	0.823
DM5	3.962	1.018
PT1	3.688	0.875
PT2	3.788	0.996
PT3	3.925	1.104
PT4	3.650	0.963
PT5	3.638	1.087
PD1	3.575	0.961
PD2	3.200	0.967
PD3	3.237	0.925
PD4	3.175	0.905
PD5	3.113	0.930

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

For the digital marketing variable, the mean scores range from 3.650 to 3.962, indicating generally positive perceptions of Yamaha's digital marketing practices. The highest mean value appears in DM5, which measures the consistency of digital marketing information across various online platforms. This result suggests that respondents perceive Yamaha's digital communication as relatively consistent between social media, websites, and other digital channels. Such consistency is important because integrated communication across digital platforms enhances the credibility and clarity of marketing messages. Meanwhile, DM4, which assesses the interactivity of Yamaha's digital marketing content, records the lowest mean value within this construct. Although the value still reflects a positive perception, the result indicates that respondents perceive a slightly lower level of interactive engagement in Yamaha's digital marketing activities compared with other aspects such as information completeness (DM1) and accessibility through digital platforms (DM2). Overall, the findings indicate that Yamaha's digital marketing is considered informative and accessible, although opportunities remain to strengthen interactive communication with consumers.

Regarding the perceived trust construct, the mean values range between 3.638 and 3.925, indicating a moderate to positive level of trust toward Yamaha's digital marketing communications. The highest mean score is observed for PT3, which reflects respondents' perceptions that Yamaha's digital marketing conveys honesty and transparency. This suggests that respondents generally believe the digital information presented by Yamaha is transparent and aligned with their expectations. Indicators PT1 and PT2, which represent the reliability and accuracy of digital information, also show relatively high mean values, indicating that respondents tend to view Yamaha's digital marketing channels as credible sources of product information. However, PT5, which measures whether Yamaha fulfills the promises conveyed in its digital marketing messages, records a slightly lower mean score. This result implies that although respondents generally trust the information provided, some consumers may still evaluate whether the brand's promotional claims fully correspond to their actual product experiences.

For the purchase decision construct, the mean values range from 3.113 to 3.575, which are slightly lower than those of the other constructs. The highest mean value is found in PD1, indicating that digital marketing information helps consumers identify their needs before purchasing a motorcycle. This suggests that digital marketing serves an important informational role during the early stage of the consumer decision-making process. Similarly, PD2 and PD3 indicate that digital information assists consumers in evaluating Yamaha motorcycles and influences their brand preferences. However, indicators related to the final stage of decision-making—particularly PD4 and PD5—show relatively lower mean scores. These results suggest that although digital marketing supports information search and product evaluation, it does not always directly determine the final purchase decision. Consumers may still rely on additional considerations such as product experience, price, or recommendations before committing to a purchase.

The standard deviation values across all indicators range from 0.823 to 1.104, indicating moderate variability in respondents’ responses. This suggests that although most respondents share similar perceptions regarding Yamaha’s digital marketing and trust formation, there remains some variation in how individuals interpret digital information and translate it into purchasing decisions.

Overall, the descriptive statistics demonstrate that respondents perceive Yamaha’s digital marketing activities positively in terms of information quality, accessibility, and consistency, which contributes to the development of consumer trust. Nevertheless, the slightly lower scores associated with the purchase decision indicators indicate that the transition from digital exposure to actual purchasing behavior involves additional psychological considerations. This pattern supports the conceptual argument of the study that perceived trust functions as a critical mechanism linking digital marketing activities with consumer purchase decisions.

Outer Model Evaluation

The outer model evaluation was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model prior to testing the structural relationships. This evaluation includes indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity, which are essential to ensure that the latent constructs are measured accurately in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. Outer model evaluation results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	HTMT Ratio (Max)
Digital Marketing	DM1	0.892	0.914	0.936	0.744	0.756
	DM2	0.853				
	DM3	0.904				
	DM4	0.860				
	DM5	0.799				
Perceived Trust	PT1	0.852	0.909	0.932	0.734	0.775
	PT2	0.852				
	PT3	0.915				
	PT4	0.846				
	PT5	0.815				
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.919	0.885	0.916	0.687	0.775
	PD2	0.867				
	PD3	0.848				
	PD4	0.718				
	PD5	0.779				

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio, which is widely regarded as a more robust and reliable approach in evaluating construct distinctiveness.

To further strengthen this assessment, the HTMT ratio was examined. The results indicate that the HTMT values between constructs are as follows: Digital Marketing and Perceived Trust (0.756), Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision (0.775), and Perceived Trust and Purchase Decision (0.775). All HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity is satisfactorily established (Hair et al., 2019).

These findings confirm that the constructs of Digital Marketing, Perceived Trust, and Purchase Decision are statistically distinct and capture different conceptual domains within the research model.

However, it is important to note that, from a conceptual perspective, some measurement items—particularly within the purchase decision construct—may reflect elements related to digital marketing exposure. While this does not violate statistical thresholds of discriminant validity, it may introduce a degree of conceptual overlap between constructs. Therefore, future research is encouraged to refine measurement items to ensure stricter one-dimensionality and clearer construct separation.

Table 5. Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criterion)

Construct	Digital Marketing	Perceived Trust	Purchase Decision
Digital Marketing	0.863		
Perceived Trust	0.593	0.857	
Purchase Decision	0.553	0.705	0.829

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

Next Step, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion to determine whether each latent construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural model (Fornel & Larcker, 1981). According to this criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than the correlation values between that construct and other constructs in the model.

As presented in Table 5, the square root of AVE for Digital Marketing (0.863) is higher than its correlations with Perceived Trust (0.593) and Purchase Decision (0.553). Similarly, the square root of AVE for Perceived Trust (0.857) exceeds its correlations with Digital Marketing (0.593) and Purchase Decision (0.705). In addition, the square root of AVE for Purchase Decision (0.829) is greater than its correlations with Digital Marketing (0.553) and Perceived Trust (0.705).

These results indicate that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates adequate discriminant validity, confirming that the constructs of digital marketing, perceived trust, and purchase decision represent conceptually distinct variables within the research framework.

The presence of satisfactory discriminant validity strengthens the credibility of the measurement model and ensures that subsequent structural model analysis can accurately examine the relationships among the constructs.

Overall, the measurement model meets the required reliability and validity criteria and is therefore suitable for further structural model analysis.

Inner Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The inner model evaluation was conducted to examine the structural relationships among latent variables and to assess the predictive power of the proposed research model. In PLS-SEM, the evaluation of the structural model focuses on the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and their statistical significance obtained through bootstrapping procedures (Hair et al., 2019).

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by the exogenous variables. According to Haryono (2017), R^2 values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 can be interpreted as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Variable	R^2 Value	Interpretation
Perceived Trust	0.352	Moderate
Purchase Decision	0.525	Moderate to Strong

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

The results indicate that digital marketing explains 35.2% of the variance in perceived trust, while digital marketing and perceived trust jointly explain 52.5% of the variance in purchase decision. These findings demonstrate that the proposed model has adequate explanatory power.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

In addition to the coefficient of determination (R^2), the predictive relevance of the model was assessed using the Stone–Geisser Q^2 value obtained through the blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 statistic evaluates

the model’s capability to predict the observed values of endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Table 7 presents the Q² values for the endogenous variables.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Endogenous Variable	Q ² Value	Interpretation
Perceived Trust	0.241	Moderate predictive relevance
Purchase Decision	0.318	Moderate to strong predictive relevance

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

In addition to the coefficient of determination (R²), the predictive relevance of the model was evaluated using the Stone–Geisser Q² value obtained through the blindfolding procedure. The Q² statistic assesses the model’s ability to accurately predict the observed values of endogenous constructs.

As presented in Table 7, the Q² value for perceived trust is 0.241, indicating moderate predictive relevance, while the Q² value for purchase decision is 0.318, which can be interpreted as moderate to strong predictive relevance. Since all Q² values are greater than zero, the results confirm that the structural model has adequate predictive capability.

These findings suggest that the model is not only explanatory, as indicated by the R² values, but also possesses sufficient predictive accuracy in estimating consumer trust and purchase decision outcomes. This strengthens the robustness of the proposed model and supports its applicability in understanding consumer behavior in digital marketing contexts.

Effect Size (f²)

Effect size (f²) analysis is conducted to evaluate the magnitude of the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous construct within the structural model. While the coefficient of determination (R²) indicates the overall explanatory power of the model, effect size assesses how strongly a specific independent variable contributes to explaining the variance of a dependent variable. In Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the f² value measures the change in R² when a particular exogenous construct is included or excluded from the model.

According to the guidelines proposed by Joseph F. Hair Jr. and colleagues, f² values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, this analysis helps determine the practical significance of each structural relationship in addition to its statistical significance.

Table 8. Effect size (f²)

Relationship	f ² Value	Effect Size
Digital Marketing Effectiveness → Perceived Trust	0.543	Large
Digital Marketing Effectiveness → Purchase Decision	0.059	Small
Perceived Trust → Purchase Decision	0.460	Large

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS (2026)

Table 8 presents the effect size (f²) values for the relationships among the constructs in the structural model. The results indicate that digital marketing has a strong effect on perceived trust, with an f² value of 0.543, which exceeds the threshold for a large effect size. This finding suggests that digital marketing plays a substantial role in explaining the variance in perceived trust among Yamaha motorcycle consumers. In other words, improvements in digital marketing activities significantly contribute to strengthening consumers’ trust perceptions.

Furthermore, perceived trust also demonstrates a large effect on purchase decision, with an f² value of 0.460. This result indicates that perceived trust is a major determinant influencing consumers’ decisions to purchase Yamaha motorcycles. The magnitude of this effect highlights the importance of trust as a psychological mechanism that translates digital marketing exposure into actual consumer behavior.

In contrast, the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decision shows an f² value of 0.059, which falls within the small effect size category. This suggests that digital marketing alone contributes only marginally to explaining variations in purchase decisions when perceived trust is included

in the model. The relatively small effect reinforces the earlier finding that digital marketing does not directly drive purchasing behavior, but instead influences purchase decisions primarily through the formation of consumer trust.

Overall, the effect size analysis confirms that perceived trust serves as a critical mechanism in the research model, mediating the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions. These findings further support the structural model results, which indicate that trust plays a dominant role in shaping consumer decision-making in the context of high-involvement products such as motorcycles.

Model Fit Indices

In addition to assessing the explanatory power (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2), model fit evaluation was conducted to examine how well the proposed model reproduces the observed data. Model fit provides an overall assessment of the discrepancy between the empirical data and the model-implied covariance matrix, thereby indicating the adequacy of the model structure.

In Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is commonly used as a goodness-of-fit measure. According to Hair et al. (2019), an SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good model fit, suggesting that the model sufficiently explains the observed relationships among variables.

Table 9. Model Fit

Model Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.066	0.066	< 0.08	Good Fit
d_ULS	0.521	0.521	-	Acceptable
d_G	0.337	0.337	-	Acceptable
Chi-square	146.635	146.635	-	-
NFI	0.847	0.847	> 0.80	Acceptable Fit

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS (2026)

The model fit assessment results presented in Table 9 indicate that the proposed structural model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit. The SRMR value of 0.066 is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. This suggests that the discrepancy between the observed data and the model-implied correlations is minimal (Hair et al., 2021).

Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.847 exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.80, indicating that the model has a satisfactory fit compared to a null model. Although indices such as d_ULS and d_G do not have strict threshold criteria, their relatively low values further support the adequacy of the model (Hair et al., 2021).

Overall, these results confirm that the proposed model is well-specified and capable of representing the empirical data structure, thereby strengthening the validity of the structural relationships tested in this study.

Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was performed by examining the path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is considered supported when the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019; Santosa, 2018). The results of hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. Path coefficients and hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Digital Marketing Effectiveness \rightarrow Perceived Trust	0.593	7.264	0.000	Supported
H2	Perceived Trust \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.581	5.849	0.000	Supported
H3	Digital Marketing Effectiveness \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.209	1.920	0.055	Not Supported

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

The reporting of path coefficients follows the guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2019), where standardized path coefficients (β) are used instead of raw output labels from statistical software.

The results show that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on perceived trust, supporting H1. Perceived trust also has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision, supporting H2. However, the direct effect of digital marketing on purchase decision is not statistically significant, leading to the rejection of H3.

Mediation Effect Analysis

To examine the mediating role of perceived trust, an indirect effect analysis was conducted using bootstrapping. Mediation is established when the indirect effect is statistically significant. Moreover, full mediation occurs when the direct effect becomes insignificant while the indirect effect remains significant. Table 11 presents the results of the mediation analysis.

Table 11. Indirect effect (mediation) analysis

Hypotheses	Path	Original Sample (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H4	Digital Marketing Effectiveness → Perceived Trust → Purchase Decision	0.344	4.255	0.000	Full Mediation

Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

The indirect effect of digital marketing on purchase decision through perceived trust is positive and statistically significant. Since the direct effect of digital marketing on purchase decision is not significant, perceived trust fully mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decision.

Overall, the inner model evaluation confirms that the proposed research model is empirically supported. Digital marketing significantly influences perceived trust, and perceived trust plays a critical role in shaping purchase decisions. The findings also indicate that the influence of digital marketing on purchase decision operates primarily through perceived trust rather than through a direct pathway (See Figure 2).

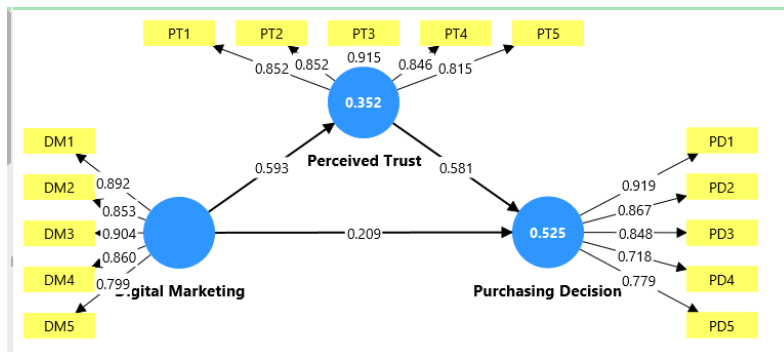


Figure 2. Structure Equation Model
Source: Data processed with Smart-PLS (2026)

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of the mechanism through which digital marketing influences consumer behavior, particularly in the context of high-involvement products such as motorcycles. The results reveal that digital marketing does not directly drive purchase decisions, but operates through a psychological mechanism, namely perceived trust, which plays a central mediating role.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings strongly support the Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework (S–O–R). Digital marketing, as the external stimulus, significantly affects the organism component, represented by perceived trust. This result is consistent with prior studies suggesting that digital marketing enhances consumer trust by improving information transparency and perceived credibility (Hidayat et al., 2021; Salman & Prasetyo, 2025). However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that the effectiveness of digital marketing is not solely dependent on information exposure,

but rather on how such information is cognitively evaluated by consumers within a structured psychological process (J. B. Halik, Halik, et al., 2026; J. B. Halik & Halik, 2024).

The significant relationship between digital marketing and perceived trust highlights that consumers actively assess the clarity, accessibility, and consistency of digital content before forming trust perceptions. This finding aligns with the information processing perspective, where consumers are viewed as active evaluators rather than passive recipients of marketing stimuli (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974; Vieira, 2013). In this regard, the study confirms that trust emerges as a critical evaluative outcome of digital marketing activities, particularly in environments characterized by information asymmetry.

Furthermore, the results indicate that perceived trust has a strong and significant effect on purchase decision. This finding is in line with previous studies emphasizing trust as a key determinant of consumer decision-making in digital environments (Habibi et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). However, this study provides a more robust explanation by positioning trust as a central mediating construct rather than merely an independent predictor. In the context of motorcycle purchases, which involve higher financial and functional risks, trust serves as a necessary condition that reduces uncertainty and facilitates decision-making. This reinforces the notion that trust is not simply an outcome of marketing activities, but a fundamental mechanism that enables their effectiveness.

Interestingly, the direct effect of digital marketing on purchase decision was found to be insignificant. This finding contrasts with several prior studies that reported a significant direct relationship between digital marketing and purchase decisions, particularly in low-involvement product contexts (Tallamma et al., 2025). The discrepancy suggests that product involvement plays a critical role in shaping consumer responses. For high-involvement products such as motorcycles, consumers tend to engage in more deliberate and rational decision-making processes, requiring stronger psychological assurance before committing to a purchase. As a result, digital marketing alone is insufficient to trigger behavioral responses without the presence of trust.

This finding also challenges the common assumption in marketing practice that increasing digital exposure or promotional intensity will directly lead to higher purchase decisions. Instead, the results emphasize that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends on its ability to build trust through high-quality communication. Attributes such as clarity of information, interactivity, and consistency across digital platforms, as captured in the measurement model, play a crucial role in shaping trust. This supports the view from advertising effectiveness literature that message quality and credibility are more influential than mere exposure frequency.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by providing a mechanism-based explanation of digital marketing effectiveness grounded in the S–O–R framework. It demonstrates that the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decision is fully mediated by perceived trust, thereby highlighting the importance of internal psychological processes in consumer behavior. This finding enriches existing research by clarifying that digital marketing strategies must go beyond visibility and focus on building trust to effectively influence consumer decisions, particularly in high-involvement product categories.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by clarifying the mechanism through which digital marketing influences purchase decisions. The findings reinforce stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) logic, where digital marketing acts as an external stimulus, perceived trust functions as the internal evaluative state, and purchase decision represents the behavioral response. By demonstrating a full mediation effect, this study provides empirical evidence that trust is not merely an outcome of digital marketing, but a necessary condition for its effectiveness in high-involvement purchasing contexts.

Importantly, the practical implications derived from this study are grounded in the specific attributes captured by the measurement of digital marketing. Indicators such as clarity of information, interactivity, and consistency across digital platforms directly reflect the qualitative dimensions of digital marketing that significantly influence perceived trust. As such, the recommendation for firms to prioritize transparent communication, consistent messaging, and interactive engagement is not merely conceptual, but empirically supported by the measurement structure employed in this study.

From a practical perspective, the results offer important implications for firms, particularly in the automotive industry. Companies should not focus solely on increasing the frequency or visibility of digital marketing campaigns. Instead, strategic emphasis should be placed on building trust through transparent messaging, consistent information across platforms, and interactive communication with consumers. Digital marketing strategies that fail to establish trust may increase awareness but are unlikely to translate

into actual sales. Therefore, marketers should prioritize trust-oriented digital content to enhance consumer confidence and support purchasing decisions.

Overall, the discussion highlights that the effectiveness of digital marketing lies not in direct persuasion, but in its ability to cultivate trust. This insight provides both theoretical enrichment and actionable guidance for practitioners seeking to optimize digital marketing strategies in competitive and information-intensive markets.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the role of digital marketing in influencing purchase decisions through perceived trust among Yamaha motorcycle consumers in Makassar. The findings provide clear evidence that digital marketing significantly enhances perceived trust, and perceived trust, in turn, plays a decisive role in shaping consumers' purchase decisions. These results confirm that trust is a critical psychological mechanism in digital marketing effectiveness, particularly in high-involvement product contexts.

The hypothesis testing results indicate that the relationship between digital marketing and perceived trust is positive and statistically significant, supporting the first hypothesis. Similarly, perceived trust has a significant positive effect on purchase decision, confirming the second hypothesis. However, the direct effect of digital marketing on purchase decision is not statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the third hypothesis. This pattern of results suggests that digital marketing alone does not directly drive purchasing behavior without first establishing consumer trust.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that perceived trust fully mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decision. This finding highlights that digital marketing contributes to purchasing decisions primarily by reducing uncertainty and increasing consumer confidence, rather than by directly persuading consumers to purchase. Thus, the research objectives are achieved by demonstrating how trust functions as the key link between digital marketing efforts and consumer decision-making.

From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces Consumer Behavior Theory and the stimulus–organism–response framework by empirically validating the mediating role of perceived trust in digital environments. The findings extend existing digital marketing literature by emphasizing that trust is not merely an outcome of marketing activities but a necessary condition for translating digital engagement into actual purchase decisions.

Practically, the findings suggest that firms should prioritize trust-oriented digital marketing strategies by strengthening key communication attributes identified in this study, including clarity of information, interactivity of digital content, and consistency across platforms. These elements have been empirically captured through the measurement of digital marketing and are shown to play a critical role in enhancing perceived trust, which subsequently drives purchase decisions. Therefore, rather than focusing solely on increasing promotional intensity, firms should emphasize the quality and credibility of digital communication to effectively influence consumer behavior.

Beyond its empirical findings, this study highlights important social, managerial, and scientific relevance. From a social perspective, the results emphasize the importance of trustworthy digital information in helping consumers make informed purchasing decisions in increasingly digitalized markets. From a managerial standpoint, the findings suggest that firms should prioritize credibility, transparency, and consistency in digital marketing communications rather than focusing solely on promotional exposure. Trust-oriented digital strategies are therefore essential for strengthening consumer confidence and encouraging actual purchase behavior. Scientifically, this research contributes to the digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by demonstrating that perceived trust functions as a critical mediating mechanism linking digital marketing stimuli to behavioral outcomes, particularly in high-involvement product contexts.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the research focuses specifically on the motorcycle industry, particularly Yamaha consumers in Makassar. The characteristics of this market—such as strong brand competition and high consumer involvement—may shape trust formation differently compared with other product categories. Consequently, the mechanism identified in this study may vary in industries with lower perceived risk or impulse-driven purchasing behavior.

Second, the research model examines perceived trust as the primary psychological mechanism linking digital marketing and purchase decisions. While this approach helps clarify the mediating role of trust, other cognitive or affective variables—such as perceived risk, brand image, or consumer engagement—may also influence how digital marketing translates into purchasing behavior. Some measurement items, particularly within the purchase decision construct, include elements of digital marketing exposure, which may introduce conceptual overlap across constructs and affect discriminant validity.

Future research could extend the model by incorporating additional psychological constructs or by comparing different product categories to further understand the conditions under which digital marketing directly influences purchase decisions.

AI disclosure statement

The authors used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to assist in language refinement and editing. All intellectual contributions, analysis, and interpretations remain the responsibility of the authors.

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