

HOW DIGITAL MARKETING BUILDS PURCHASE INTENTION FOR LABORATORY EQUIPMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF BRAND IMAGE AND PERCEIVED VALUE

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of digital marketing on purchase intention through brand image and perceived value among prospective customers of PT Lichem Center Indonesia. A quantitative, causal-associative, and cross-sectional survey involved 151 respondents selected through purposive and accidental sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 and 5,000 bootstrap subsamples. The results show that digital marketing significantly improves brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention. Brand image and perceived value also significantly increase purchase intention. Both variables provide complementary partial mediation in the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention. Perceived value is the strongest direct predictor of purchase intention, while digital marketing has its strongest effect on brand image. The model explains 35.8% of purchase intention. These findings indicate that digital marketing for laboratory equipment should emphasize credible brand evidence and clearly communicate functional and economic value to strengthen prospective customers' purchase consideration.

Keywords: brand image; digital marketing; laboratory equipment; perceived value; purchase intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has reshaped how business-to-business (B2B) buyers identify suppliers, search for technical information, compare alternatives, and evaluate products before interacting directly with sales representatives. Digital marketing now integrates websites, social media, email, webinars, digital catalogs, messaging platforms, and virtual consultations across the customer journey. This transformation is particularly relevant for laboratory equipment, where purchasing decisions involve technical complexity, substantial financial commitment, application compatibility, regulatory considerations, and long-term service requirements. Prospective buyers typically evaluate equipment accuracy, reliability, software compatibility, consumables, calibration, training, warranty, and after-sales support before making procurement decisions.

In such high-involvement purchasing contexts, digital marketing serves not merely as a promotional channel but as an information and evaluation mechanism. Accessible, interactive, informative, credible, and engaging digital communication can reduce information asymmetry and facilitate pre-purchase evaluation. However, digital exposure does not automatically create purchase intention. Prospective B2B customers must first determine whether the information received establishes confidence in the supplier and whether the offered equipment generates benefits that justify its financial, operational, and risk-related sacrifices. Previous studies have found that digital marketing can influence purchase intention, although its effectiveness often depends on intervening customer evaluations such as brand image and perceived value (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022; Febriani et al., 2022).

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for explaining this process. Within the present study, digital marketing represents the stimulus, brand image and perceived value represent internal evaluative states or organisms, and purchase intention represents the behavioral response. The framework suggests that marketing stimuli may influence behavioral intentions both directly and indirectly by shaping how prospective customers cognitively and affectively evaluate the supplier and its offering (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Accordingly, digital communication should be assessed not simply according to exposure but according to whether it creates meaningful internal evaluations that encourage purchasing consideration.

Brand image represents one such evaluative mechanism. It reflects the associations customers develop regarding the company, product, users, brand identity, and brand personality. In technically complex markets, a favorable brand image can operate as a risk-reduction signal because prospective customers cannot fully verify equipment reliability and long-term performance before purchase. Digital communication that provides credible product information, application evidence, professional user references, demonstrations, and organizational expertise can strengthen customer confidence in both the supplier and its products. Empirical evidence also indicates that digital and social media marketing can strengthen brand image and that favorable brand associations subsequently increase purchase intention (Ali & Naushad, 2023).

A second mechanism is perceived value, which reflects customers' evaluation of the benefits received relative to the sacrifices required. In laboratory-equipment purchasing, value extends beyond acquisition price. Functional performance, accuracy, reliability, ease of use, reagent efficiency, training, maintenance, calibration, service responsiveness, warranty, and equipment downtime can all influence whether prospective customers regard an offering as worthwhile. Thus, effective digital marketing should translate technical specifications into operational and economic consequences that are meaningful to laboratory users. Existing research supports the role of perceived value in connecting digital marketing activities with purchasing responses (Febriani et al., 2022).

These two mechanisms are conceptually distinct but complementary. Brand image primarily addresses “Can this supplier and brand be trusted?”, whereas perceived value addresses “Are the expected benefits worth the costs and risks?” In a high-involvement B2B decision, both questions may need to be answered before purchase intention develops. A technically credible brand may still generate limited intention if buyers perceive insufficient economic or functional value. Conversely, strong product benefits may not be sufficient when the supplier lacks credibility, reputation, or evidence of professional use.

Purchase intention in this study represents prospective customers' tendency to consider purchasing, seek additional information, recommend the product, prioritize the offering, or further explore procurement possibilities. Because respondents had not yet purchased PT Lichem Center Indonesia's products, purchase intention captures the pre-purchase evaluation stage rather than actual procurement behavior. This distinction is particularly relevant in B2B markets because purchase decisions may involve multiple organizational actors, budget approval, technical evaluation, demonstrations, quotations, and procurement procedures before actual transactions occur.

Previous studies have generally established relationships among digital marketing, brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention. However, much of this evidence has been generated in consumer, e-commerce, social-media, or platform-based contexts rather than specialized B2B equipment markets (Ali & Naushad, 2023; Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022; Febriani et al., 2022). Consequently, less is known about whether image-based and value-based evaluations simultaneously explain how digital marketing influences prospective buyers of technically complex laboratory equipment.

This study addresses that gap by examining prospective customers of PT Lichem Center Indonesia and integrating digital marketing, brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention into a parallel mediation model. The study examines the direct effects of digital marketing on brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention; the effects of brand image and perceived value on purchase intention; and the mediating roles of both evaluative mechanisms. Its principal contribution lies in explaining that digital marketing effectiveness in a specialized B2B market may operate through two simultaneous conversion mechanisms: reputation-based evaluation through brand image and benefit-sacrifice evaluation through perceived value.

Hypotheses Development

Credible, informative, accessible, interactive, and engaging digital communication can shape customers' associations with a supplier and its products. Digital marketing therefore provides information and experiences from which prospective buyers develop perceptions of corporate credibility, product quality, user relevance, identity, and brand personality. Previous evidence demonstrates a positive relationship between digital marketing activities and brand image (Ali & Naushad, 2023). Therefore:

H1: Digital marketing has a positive effect on brand image.

Digital communication can also help prospective buyers understand product functionality, operating benefits, service support, cost implications, and potential risks. By reducing information uncertainty and clarifying the benefits associated with an offering, digital marketing can improve customers' benefit-sacrifice evaluations (Febriani et al., 2022). Therefore:

H2: Digital marketing has a positive effect on perceived value.

A favorable brand image can reduce perceived uncertainty and strengthen confidence in a technically complex product. When prospective customers associate the supplier and its products with credibility, professional use, quality, and reliability, their willingness to consider the product should increase (Ali & Naushad, 2023). Therefore:

H3: Brand image has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Perceived value reflects whether functional, emotional, social, and economic benefits justify monetary and nonmonetary sacrifices. Higher perceived value should therefore increase buyers' willingness to consider an equipment purchase (Febriani et al., 2022). Therefore:

H4: Perceived value has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Digital marketing can directly stimulate information search, inquiries, product comparison, demonstration requests, quotations, recommendations, and purchase consideration. Prior research supports a positive association between digital marketing exposure and purchase intention (Alwan & Alshurideh, 2022). Therefore:

H5: Digital marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The S-O-R perspective further suggests that digital stimuli can influence behavioral responses by first shaping internal evaluations. Digital marketing may increase purchase intention because it strengthens favorable associations with the supplier and its products. Therefore:

H6: Brand image mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention.

Similarly, digital communication may increase purchase intention by enabling prospective customers to recognize functional, economic, and other benefits relative to the sacrifices involved in acquiring and operating the equipment. Therefore:

H7: Perceived value mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, causal-associative, and cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among digital marketing, brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention. The research focused on prospective customers of PT Lichem Center Indonesia who had been exposed to digital marketing related to laboratory equipment.

Because the total population size was unknown, respondents were recruited using non-probability purposive and accidental sampling. The final sample consisted of 151 respondents, exceeding the study's minimum sample calculation of 139.

Respondents were required to meet specific eligibility criteria. They had to have encountered the company's digital communication through channels such as the website, social media, marketplace content, email marketing, webinars, digital catalogs, WhatsApp, or other digital media. In addition, respondents had participated in at least one pre-purchase activity, including searching for information, comparing specifications, evaluating products, requesting quotations, recommending products, or considering laboratory equipment. Respondents who had already purchased the company's products were excluded. These criteria ensured that the study specifically captured pre-purchase evaluation and intention rather than actual purchasing behavior.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Digital marketing was measured through accessibility, interactivity, informativeness, credibility, and engagement. Brand image consisted of corporate image, product image, user image, brand identity, and brand personality. Perceived value was operationalized through functional value, emotional value, social value, and value for money, while purchase intention was measured through transactional, referral, preferential, and exploratory intention.

Table 1. Construct Operationalization

Construct	Dimensions
Digital marketing	Accessibility; interactivity; informativeness; credibility; engagement
Brand image	Corporate image; product image; user image; brand identity; brand personality
Perceived value	Functional value; emotional value; social value; value for money
Purchase intention	Transactional intention; referral intention; preferential intention; exploratory intention

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The analysis followed established PLS-SEM reporting procedures, including evaluation of both the measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The measurement model assessment focused on outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity, while the structural model examined collinearity, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), direct path coefficients, and indirect effects.

Hypothesis testing was performed using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, applying two-tailed significance testing at $\alpha = .05$. Direct effects were evaluated to test the

relationships among digital marketing, brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention. Indirect effects were then examined to determine whether brand image and perceived value functioned as mediators in the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention.

The mediation analysis was interpreted by comparing the significance and direction of the direct and indirect effects. Because both mediators were tested simultaneously within the structural model, the research was able to assess two parallel mechanisms through which digital marketing could influence purchase intention: an image-based pathway through brand image and a value-based pathway through perceived value.

The study relies on self-reported responses collected from prospective customers at a single point in time. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as associational evidence within the investigated pre-purchase context rather than definitive causal proof. In addition, because the sampling procedure was non-probability based and restricted to prospective customers of one company, statistical generalization beyond the observed context should be made cautiously.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

a. Descriptive Results

The descriptive results indicate generally favorable evaluations across all four constructs. Digital marketing recorded the highest mean (3.837), followed by brand image (3.751), purchase intention (3.536), and perceived value (3.450). The comparatively lower perceived-value score indicates that strong digital exposure and favorable brand associations had not yet been matched by equally strong evaluations of the benefits received relative to costs, operational sacrifices, and purchasing risks.

At the dimensional level, credibility and engagement were the strongest dimensions of digital marketing (.946 each), user image was the strongest dimension of brand image (.944), functional value was the strongest dimension of perceived value (.953), and exploratory intention was the strongest dimension of purchase intention (.958). This pattern is particularly relevant in a high-involvement B2B context because prospective laboratory-equipment buyers appear to respond most strongly to credible digital information, evidence of professional users, functional benefits, and opportunities to further investigate the product before procurement. Contemporary B2B research similarly emphasizes the importance of relevant digital content, buyer-stage matching, and credible informational cues throughout complex customer journeys (Marvasti et al., 2021; Purmonen et al., 2023; Salonen et al., 2024).

b. Measurement Model

The measurement model demonstrated strong convergent and discriminant validity. All outer loadings exceeded .90, ranging from .905 to .958, while AVE values ranged from .871 to .896. HTMT values ranged from .178 to .565, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity among the four constructs.

Table 2. Measurement Model Summary

Construct	Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Digital marketing	.934-.946	.968	.968	.975	.886
Brand image	.918-.944	.963	.964	.971	.871
Perceived value	.905-.953	.956	.959	.968	.883
Purchase intention	.927-.958	.961	.964	.972	.896

Note. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Although the reliability coefficients demonstrate excellent internal consistency, all Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded .95. Such extremely high values should be interpreted cautiously because they may indicate that some indicators capture highly overlapping content. Future scale refinement should therefore consider whether shorter instruments can preserve construct coverage while reducing possible indicator redundancy.

Structural Model

Structural VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 1.555, indicating no problematic collinearity among the predictors. Digital marketing explained 29.8% of brand image ($R^2 = .298$) and 11.0% of perceived value ($R^2 = .110$). Digital marketing, brand image, and perceived value jointly explained 35.8% of purchase intention ($R^2 = .358$).

Table 3. Structural Model Summary

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Interpretation
Brand image	.298	.294	Weak-moderate
Perceived value	.110	.104	Weak
Purchase intention	.358	.345	Weak-moderate

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The effect-size results further clarify the model. Digital marketing produced an f^2 of .425 on brand image, .123 on perceived value, and .040 directly on purchase intention. Brand image produced an effect size of .081 on purchase intention, whereas perceived value produced .153, the largest effect among the direct purchase-intention predictors. Thus, digital marketing primarily functions as a brand-forming mechanism, whereas perceived

value is more consequential when prospective customers move toward purchasing consideration.

The moderate R^2 of purchase intention also suggests that specialized B2B purchasing is influenced by variables outside the present model. Contemporary B2B customer-journey research shows that complex buying processes involve multiple touchpoints, actors, organizational roles, competencies, and procurement stages that cannot be reduced to marketing communication alone (Lundin & Kindström, 2023; Purmonen et al., 2023; Terpoorten et al., 2024).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects

Hypothesis and Path	β	t	p	Decision
H1: Digital marketing $\rightarrow$ Brand image	.546	9.774	< .001	Supported
H2: Digital marketing $\rightarrow$ Perceived value	.331	4.959	< .001	Supported
H3: Brand image $\rightarrow$ Purchase intention	.273	3.104	.002	Supported
H4: Perceived value $\rightarrow$ Purchase intention	.332	4.602	< .001	Supported
H5: Digital marketing $\rightarrow$ Purchase intention	.199	2.343	.019	Supported
H6: Digital marketing $\rightarrow$ Brand image $\rightarrow$ Purchase intention	.149	2.805	.005	Supported
H7: Digital marketing $\rightarrow$ Perceived value $\rightarrow$ Purchase intention	.110	3.060	.002	Supported

Note. H6 95% CI = .052-.261; H7 95% CI = .052-.194.

Source: Processed Data, 2026

All seven hypotheses were supported. Importantly, both indirect effects were significant while the direct digital marketing $\rightarrow$ purchase intention relationship also remained significant and positive. The results therefore indicate complementary partial mediation through both brand image and perceived value.

Discussion

1. Digital Marketing and Brand Image

Digital marketing had a strong positive effect on brand image ($\beta = .546$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. This was the largest direct coefficient in the entire model, indicating that the principal contribution of digital marketing in this setting is the formation of favorable brand associations rather than the immediate stimulation of purchase intention. Credibility and engagement were the most salient digital-marketing dimensions, while user image was the strongest brand-image dimension.

The finding is consistent with research showing that digital and social-media communication can create brand-related evaluations by providing information, interaction, and signals about professional legitimacy. Raji et al. (2019) found that social-media communication content can strengthen brand image and subsequent behavioral intentions, while Khan (2022) demonstrated that social-media marketing activities contribute to brand-related experiences and purchase intentions. More broadly, B2B digital communication

increasingly performs a relationship- and reputation-building role rather than functioning merely as a promotional channel (Cartwright et al., 2021; Krings et al., 2021).

For laboratory equipment, user image is especially meaningful. Prospective customers may place greater confidence in a supplier when digital content demonstrates that credible laboratories, researchers, hospitals, universities, or professionals use the equipment successfully. This interpretation is consistent with B2B signaling research showing that competence cues and credible professional sources can reduce uncertainty regarding vendors' offerings (Crisafulli et al., 2022; Tóth et al., 2022). Therefore, PT Lichem Center Indonesia should not rely on generic promotional claims. Digital content should demonstrate who uses the equipment, for what application, under what conditions, and with what outcome.

2. Digital Marketing and Perceived Value

Digital marketing positively affected perceived value ($\beta = .331, p < .001$), supporting H2. However, this effect was notably smaller than the digital marketing $\rightarrow$ brand image effect, and perceived value had the lowest descriptive mean among the four constructs. This result indicates that creating an attractive and credible digital presence is easier than demonstrating a convincing benefit-sacrifice proposition. In a technical B2B purchase, prospective customers must evaluate not only acquisition price but also productivity, reliability, maintenance, training, consumables, calibration, compatibility, downtime, and long-term service requirements.

The result is consistent with evidence that perceived value is strengthened when digital information helps customers understand functional and utilitarian outcomes. Zhang et al. (2023) found that utilitarian and hedonic value positively influence purchasing responses in digital environments, while Wei (2022) demonstrated in a B2B IT/IS context that value contributes significantly to purchase intention and can transmit service-quality effects. Jia et al. (2022) also showed that evaluative value mechanisms are important pathways from digital interaction to purchase intention. The managerial implication is that laboratory-equipment content should translate specifications into consequences. For example, accuracy should be connected to data reliability, automation to turnaround time, low reagent consumption to operating cost, software integration to traceability, and service availability to reduced downtime.

3. Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image had a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .273, p = .002$), supporting H3. This result demonstrates that favorable associations with the corporation, product, users, identity, and personality reduce uncertainty and increase the likelihood that prospective customers will further consider the equipment. The relationship is particularly relevant to high-involvement products because prospective buyers often cannot completely

verify product durability, service continuity, or long-term performance before procurement. A strong brand image can therefore operate as an informational shortcut or credibility signal.

Raji et al. (2019) found that brand image mediates relationships between social-media communication and behavioral responses, while Jia et al. (2022) identified a significant positive relationship between brand image and purchase intention. Research on information credibility also indicates that external information cues can meaningfully affect purchasing evaluations under uncertainty (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). For PT Lichem Center Indonesia, brand-image development should therefore emphasize corporate credibility, product reliability, professional user evidence, technical expertise, and application relevance rather than visual branding alone.

4. Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Perceived value had the strongest direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .332$, $p < .001$), supporting H4. It also produced the largest effect size among the purchase-intention predictors ($f^2 = .153$). Functional value was the strongest perceived-value dimension. This is a central finding because it shows that in the laboratory-equipment context, prospective customers ultimately respond more strongly to what the equipment can deliver relative to the sacrifices required than to marketing exposure itself. While a strong brand can create confidence, value determines whether the offering is considered economically and operationally worthwhile.

This finding is consistent with research demonstrating that perceived value is a major determinant of purchase intention, particularly when customers evaluate functional performance and uncertainty. Wei (2022) found that value significantly influenced intentions in an IT/IS outsourcing context, while Zhang et al. (2023) showed that utilitarian value positively affects purchase intention in digital purchasing environments. Song et al. (2023) further demonstrated that perceived value can mediate how information cues affect purchasing responses, emphasizing its role as a cognitive evaluation mechanism. Consequently, digital marketing should include total-cost-of-ownership calculations, application comparisons, consumable-cost information, service response standards, warranty conditions, calibration schedules, expected equipment life, and productivity benefits.

5. Digital Marketing and Purchase Intention

Digital marketing directly increased purchase intention ($\beta = .199$, $p = .019$), supporting H5. However, its coefficient was smaller than those of perceived value and brand image. This indicates that digital exposure can stimulate exploratory behavior, product inquiries, consultation, demonstration requests, quotations, and shortlisting, but it is not the dominant mechanism driving purchase consideration. This result aligns with contemporary B2B research emphasizing that digital channels support multiple stages of the buyer journey and

facilitate movement from information search to sales interaction rather than automatically producing transactions (Chaker et al., 2022; Marvasti et al., 2021).

Terho et al. (2022) similarly argue that effective B2B digital content marketing requires generating customer-journey intelligence, creating valuable content, and strategically sharing it at appropriate stages. Salonen et al. (2024) further demonstrate that content effectiveness depends substantially on whether information matches the customer's particular journey stage. Thus, digital marketing effectiveness should not be assessed only through impressions, clicks, followers, or engagement metrics. For specialized equipment, stronger indicators include qualified inquiries, application discussions, demo requests, quotation requests, shortlisting, technical evaluations, and procurement progression.

6. Mediating Role of Brand Image

Brand image significantly mediated the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention ($\beta = .149$, $p = .005$; 95% CI [.052, .261]), supporting H6. Because the direct digital-marketing effect remained positive and significant, the mediation is complementary partial mediation. The result indicates that digital marketing influences purchase intention through two simultaneous routes. The first is a direct response to digital information, while the second occurs when digital communication first creates stronger favorable brand associations, which subsequently increase purchase intention.

This mechanism is consistent with S-O-R logic and prior studies showing that brand-related internal evaluations transmit the effects of online communication toward behavioral intentions (Raji et al., 2019; Zhu & Li, 2020). Contemporary B2B research further suggests that digital touchpoints influence buyers not simply through exposure but through how customers interpret the supplier across an evolving journey (Lundin & Kindström, 2023; Purmonen et al., 2023). The finding means that PT Lichem Center Indonesia should develop a proof-based brand image. Installation stories, technical webinars, client application cases, expert profiles, certification evidence, and professional testimonials can transform digital exposure into greater confidence in the supplier.

7. Mediating Role of Perceived Value

Perceived value also significantly mediated the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention ($\beta = .110$, $p = .002$; 95% CI [.052, .194]), supporting H7. Because the direct path remained significant, perceived value also provided complementary partial mediation. Although the indirect effect through perceived value was smaller than the brand-image pathway, perceived value was the strongest direct predictor of purchase intention. This distinction is theoretically important. Digital marketing more easily builds image, but when prospective buyers evaluate actual purchase consideration, value becomes more decisive.

Evidence from digital purchasing research similarly indicates that perceived value can operate as an internal evaluation mechanism connecting information cues with purchase intention (Song et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). In B2B service purchasing, perceived value can also transmit service-related evaluations into purchasing intention (Wei, 2022). Together, the two indirect effects totaled .259. When combined with the direct effect of .199, the total effect of digital marketing was approximately .458. Thus, approximately 56.6% of the total effect was transmitted through brand image and perceived value. This demonstrates that digital marketing effectiveness in specialized B2B markets is predominantly generated through internal buyer evaluation rather than direct promotional response alone.

Theoretical Implications

First, it extends the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework to a specialized, high-involvement B2B purchasing context. Digital marketing operates as the external stimulus, but its influence on purchase intention is substantially transmitted through two distinct internal evaluations: brand image and perceived value. The findings therefore demonstrate that image-based and value-based mechanisms operate simultaneously rather than competitively.

Second, the findings distinguish between brand formation and purchase evaluation. Digital marketing had its strongest effect on brand image ($\beta = .546$), whereas perceived value had the strongest direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .332$). This indicates a sequential managerial logic: digital communication may first make the supplier credible and recognizable, but purchase consideration becomes stronger when the buyer can establish a convincing functional and economic value case.

Third, the complementary partial mediation results indicate that digital marketing retains a direct behavioral influence while also working through evaluative mechanisms. This is consistent with current B2B customer-journey literature, which conceptualizes purchasing as an iterative process across digital and interpersonal touchpoints rather than as a single response to promotional exposure (Lundin & Kindström, 2023; Lundin & Kindström, 2024; Purmonen et al., 2023).

The model nevertheless explains only 35.8% of purchase intention, indicating that future research should incorporate additional B2B decision factors such as perceived risk, trust, salesperson expertise, technical compatibility, organizational buying roles, procurement procedures, budget authority, competitor attractiveness, and previous brand experience.

Managerial Implications

PT Lichem Center Indonesia should develop a proof-based digital marketing funnel rather than treating digital marketing primarily as exposure generation. At the awareness stage, digital content should connect common laboratory problems with relevant product

applications. Educational articles, short technical videos, webinars, application notes, and expert commentary can establish relevance and credibility. B2B research indicates that content should be matched to buyers' information requirements and their position in the customer journey (Marvasti et al., 2021; Salonen et al., 2024; Terho et al., 2022).

At the evaluation stage, the priority should shift toward perceived value. Product pages and digital sales materials should translate specifications into performance outcomes, total cost of ownership, reagent efficiency, workflow improvement, calibration requirements, service availability, equipment uptime, training, warranty, and expected operational savings.

At the validation stage, the company should strengthen brand image using technically credible evidence. Reference installations, permission-based customer cases, professional-user stories, expert demonstrations, certifications, before-after workflow comparisons, and application performance data can reduce uncertainty. B2B evidence suggests that competence and credible external signals are particularly useful for reducing concerns in complex supplier evaluation (Crisafulli et al., 2022; Tóth et al., 2022).

At the conversion stage, every digital asset should provide clear next actions: request consultation, schedule a demonstration, discuss an application, obtain technical documentation, or request a quotation. Digital channels should also be integrated with the sales function because B2B customer journeys span multiple digital and interpersonal touchpoints (Chaker et al., 2022; Ní hAodha & Kelliher, 2022).

Finally, the company should develop a funnel dashboard linking digital accessibility, credibility, and engagement → qualified inquiry → demonstration → quotation → shortlist → negotiation → actual procurement. Brand-image and perceived-value measures should be monitored separately because they diagnose different problems: a prospect may trust the brand but still perceive insufficient economic value, or recognize strong value but remain uncertain about the supplier's credibility. The central managerial implication can therefore be summarized as Digital Marketing → Credibility and Brand Image → Confidence and Digital Marketing → Perceived Value → Economic and Functional Justification → Purchase Intention. For specialized laboratory equipment, effective digital marketing should therefore move beyond visibility and convert technical information into credible proof and measurable customer value.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of digital marketing on purchase intention through brand image and perceived value among prospective customers of PT Lichem Center Indonesia. The findings show that digital marketing significantly improves brand image, perceived value, and purchase intention, while both brand image and perceived value significantly increase purchase intention. Among the direct predictors of purchase intention, perceived value produced the strongest effect, whereas digital marketing exerted its strongest influence on brand image.

The mediation analysis confirms that brand image and perceived value both provide complementary partial mediation in the relationship between digital marketing and purchase intention. The indirect effect through brand image was stronger than the indirect effect through perceived value, indicating that digital marketing is particularly effective in shaping favorable brand associations. However, perceived value remained the strongest direct determinant of purchase intention, showing that prospective buyers ultimately place substantial importance on whether equipment benefits justify financial, operational, and risk-related sacrifices. Together, the two mediating mechanisms transmitted a substantial proportion of the total digital-marketing effect on purchase intention.

From a managerial perspective, PT Lichem Center Indonesia should develop proof-based and value-oriented digital marketing. Digital content should not focus only on visibility or engagement but should provide credible evidence regarding product performance, professional users, application suitability, service quality, warranty, training, calibration, reagent efficiency, total cost of ownership, and after-sales support. Professional user stories, application notes, live demonstrations, technical comparisons, reference installations, and clear consultation or quotation pathways can strengthen both brand confidence and perceived value.

The study is limited by its cross-sectional, self-report, non-probability sampling design, single-company context, and use of purchase intention rather than actual procurement behavior. In addition, reliability coefficients above .95 suggest potential indicator redundancy, although structural VIF values indicate no problematic collinearity. Future research should therefore use longitudinal sales-funnel data, actual purchase outcomes, multicompany samples, shorter validated scales, and additional variables such as perceived risk, technical compatibility, trust, budget authority, procurement procedures, salesperson expertise, competitor attractiveness, and prior brand familiarity.

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