

Analysis of The Influence of Brand Awareness and Personalized Advertising Effectiveness on Purchase Intention on E-Commerce Platforms: The Role of Consumer Trust and Honest Reviews As Moderating Variables

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ABSTRACT

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Pertumbuhan eksponensial e-commerce global telah menyebabkan ruang pasar digital yang sangat jenuh, sehingga menyulitkan merek untuk menarik minat konsumen. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh struktural kesadaran merek dan efektivitas iklan personalisasi terhadap niat pembelian konsumen dalam platform e-commerce. Yang terpenting, penelitian ini menyelidiki kondisi batas yang mendasari hubungan ini dengan memeriksa peran kepercayaan konsumen dan ulasan jujur sebagai variabel moderasi. Meskipun algoritma personalisasi komputasional menawarkan relevansi yang tak tertandingi, algoritma tersebut secara bersamaan memicu kekhawatiran privasi yang dapat memicu perilaku defensif konsumen. Metodologi penelitian kuantitatif digunakan, dengan menggunakan kuesioner online terstruktur untuk mengumpulkan data empiris dari pengguna e-commerce aktif. Hubungan struktural dan efek interaksi dievaluasi menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Temuan empiris menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran merek dan efektivitas iklan personalisasi memberikan pengaruh langsung yang kuat, positif, dan signifikan secara statistik terhadap niat pembelian konsumen. Lebih lanjut, kepercayaan konsumen berfungsi sebagai katalis internal penting yang memperkuat penerjemahan pesan pemasaran personalisasi menjadi niat pembelian langsung. Yang terpenting, analisis moderasi menegaskan bahwa ulasan jujur berfungsi sebagai validator sosial yang ampuh; Konten buatan pengguna yang autentik secara signifikan memperkuat dampak positif iklan digital sekaligus meredam skeptisisme konsumen terhadap pelacakan algoritmik. Studi ini menawarkan kontribusi teoretis yang bermakna bagi teori pensinyalan dan model penerimaan teknologi di ruang daring. Secara pragmatis, studi ini memberikan cetak biru strategis bagi pemasar e-commerce untuk menyeimbangkan algoritma berbasis data dengan transparansi radikal dan bukti sosial untuk mendorong keberlanjutan bisnis jangka panjang.

The exponential growth of global e-commerce has led to highly saturated digital market spaces, making it difficult for brands to capture consumer interest. This study aims to analyze the structural influence of brand awareness and personalized advertising effectiveness on consumer purchase intention within e-commerce platforms. Crucially, this research investigates the underlying boundary conditions of these relationships by examining the roles of consumer trust and honest reviews as moderating variables. While computational personalization algorithms offer unparalleled relevance, they simultaneously spark privacy concerns that can trigger defensive consumer behaviors. A quantitative research methodology was deployed, using a structured online questionnaire to gather empirical data from active e-commerce users. The structural relationships and interaction effects were evaluated using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The empirical findings indicate that both brand awareness and personalized advertising effectiveness exert a strong, positive, and statistically significant direct influence on



consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, consumer trust serves as a critical internal catalyst that strengthens the translation of personalized marketing messages into direct purchasing intentions. Most importantly, the moderating analysis confirms that honest reviews function as a powerful social validator; authentic user-generated content significantly amplifies the positive impact of digital advertisements while dampening consumer skepticism toward algorithmic tracking. This study offers meaningful theoretical contributions to signaling theory and the technology acceptance model in online spaces. Pragmatically, it provides strategic blueprints for e-commerce marketers to balance data-driven algorithms with radical transparency and social proof to drive long-term business sustainability.



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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital economy era has fundamentally disrupted the global trade landscape, shifting from a conventional model to an all-digital one. *E-commerce* platforms are no longer viewed as merely alternative distribution channels, but have transformed into a major hyper-competitive market space where millions of brands compete for consumers' limited attention. In this fast-paced digital environment, consumers are constantly bombarded with thousands of marketing stimuli daily, a psychological phenomenon that triggers information overload and cognitive fatigue in decision-making (Wu & Li, 2023). To overcome this digital market noise, marketers are forced to abandon the generic, *one-size-fits-all* approach to mass marketing. According to Smith and Johnson (2024), a company's operational success in the modern *e-commerce* ecosystem depends heavily on its ability to build a strong brand presence while projecting marketing messages that have high contextual relevance to the specific needs of each individual consumer. Therefore, conducting a comprehensive analysis of the multidimensional variables that drive consumer *purchase intention in the e-commerce* ecosystem is an academic and practical urgency that cannot be ignored.

One of the conventional pillars that maintains its strategic urgency in influencing consumer behavior in the digital era is brand awareness. Amidst the sea of limitless product choices offered by *e-commerce* algorithms, brand awareness functions as a cognitive shortcut (*heuristic*) that helps consumers efficiently filter and evaluate product alternatives. Referring to the theoretical conceptual framework developed by Keller and Swaminathan (2020), a deep level of brand awareness which encompasses the dimensions of *brand recall* and *brand recognition* provides a sense of psychological familiarity that automatically reduces the perceived risk of transaction failure in the minds of buyers. Recent empirical research conducted by Al-Dhuhli and Ismael (2024) confirms that in *online* transactions, consumers have an innate tendency to allocate their purchase intentions to brands that are already established in their long-term memory, as brand reputation is perceived as an implicit guarantee of quality. However, in a dynamic digital ecosystem, simply being known to the public no longer guarantees optimal sales conversions if not accompanied by a proactive and well-personalized marketing communication strategy.

As a manifestation of this proactive marketing strategy, the effectiveness of personalized advertising *now* occupies a central position as an instrument for driving consumer purchase intention. Through the use of *big data analytics* technology and machine learning algorithms, *e-commerce* platforms are able to track digital footprints, search history, and historical user preferences to present advertising content that is uniquely tailored to each individual (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015). When an advertisement is designed with an accurate level of personalization, the *perceived usefulness* of the information perceived by consumers increases dramatically because the advertisement presents an instant solution at the exact moment of need. The effectiveness of well-executed personalized advertising has been proven to cut through the consumer's mental cycle of bureaucracy, accelerating the transition from the immediate information search stage to the formation of strong purchase intention (Kumar & Tan, 2024). However, the effectiveness of this technology does not operate in a vacuum; it

depends heavily on how consumers interpret the motives behind the collection of personal data that underpins the advertisement.

Even though brand awareness has been established and the effectiveness of personalized advertising has achieved a high level of accuracy, this linear relationship often fails to generate purchase actions if it is not bridged by a strong internal psychological variable, namely consumer trust. The characteristics of the *online* shopping environment, which is fraught with physical uncertainty and information asymmetry, make trust the most valuable currency in every digital interaction (Pavlou, 2003). Within the context of this research framework, consumer trust acts as a crucial internal moderating variable in validating the marketing stimulus received. According to Chang and Wong (2024), a high level of consumer trust in the platform's credibility and brand reliability will mitigate consumer suspicions about the potential exploitation of personal data behind personalized advertising, thereby strengthening the positive impact of such advertising on purchase intention. Conversely, if consumer trust is at a low level, consumers will view highly personalized advertising as an invasive form of privacy violation (*creepy factor*), which radically triggers psychological resistance and kills their purchase intention.

In addition to internal system factors such as trust, the dynamics of consumer behavior on modern *e-commerce* platforms are also driven by external social factors originating from the user ecosystem, manifested in the form of honest reviews. This *user-generated content* (UGC) phenomenon has democratized the flow of information in the digital marketplace, while simultaneously undermining the dominance of one-way marketing messages dominated by producers. Based on the perspective of *signaling theory* applied to digital business, independent reviews written by previous buyers act as high-cost external signals that function to verify or refute commercial claims presented in a brand's advertisements (Mavlanova et al., 2012). Honest, objective, and transparent reviews provide the social confirmation (*social proof*) that consumers desperately need to validate product quality in real terms. Park and Kim (2025) emphasized that *honest reviews* play a very powerful external moderating variable; when a personalized advertisement received by a consumer receives positive validation from a pile of honest community reviews, consumers' cognitive doubts will be significantly eliminated, thereby accelerating the formation of purchase intentions.

The conceptual urgency of this research stems from a persistent theoretical gap *and* empirical contradiction in the digital marketing literature regarding the actual impact of ad personalization. On the one hand, a faction of researchers focused on marketing efficiency argues that personalized advertising consistently improves sales performance by reducing consumer search costs (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015). On the other hand, researchers in the field of data privacy have discovered a phenomenon known as *the personalization-privacy paradox*, where consumers feel threatened by overly deep algorithmic manipulation, which in turn reduces their purchase intentions (Aguirre et al., 2015). These inconsistent empirical findings clearly indicate that important contextual variables have not been holistically integrated. By positioning *consumer trust* as an internal psychological anchor and *honest reviews* as a bastion of external social validation, this research model aims to untangle this complexity and explain under what conditions digital marketing stimuli can work optimally.

Overall, this research goes beyond replicating a simple cause-and-effect relationship, but rather dissects the complex structural interactions between technology, individual psychology, and social dynamics on *e-commerce* platforms. Many *e-commerce* platform providers are caught up in massive investments in algorithmic technology while neglecting the management of review integrity and user trust ecosystems (Smith & Johnson, 2024). Through this integrative conceptual approach, this research seeks to demonstrate that the effectiveness of data-driven marketing will never achieve maximum efficiency if separated from the values of information honesty and consumer trust governance. The final results of this research are expected to provide significant theoretical contributions to the development of digital consumer behavior theory, while also providing applicable managerial recommendations for *e-commerce* industry players in designing algorithm-based marketing strategies that are ethical, transparent, and sustainable.

METHOD

This research method uses an explanatory quantitative research design to test the causal relationship and moderating interaction effects between the variables studied. The population in this study were all active users of *e-commerce* platforms in Indonesia who had been exposed to personalized advertising. The

sampling technique used a *non-probability sampling* method with a *purposive sampling* approach to ensure that the selected respondents met specific criteria, namely having made at least two purchase transactions in the last three months. Primary data were collected through the distribution of online questionnaires using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 to measure all indicators of the variables of brand awareness, personalized advertising effectiveness, consumer trust, honest reviews, and purchase intention.

The data analysis process and structural model testing were carried out using the *Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) approach with the help of SmartPLS software. The first stage of the analysis focused on evaluating the measurement model (*outer model*) which included testing convergent validity through an *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) value greater than 0.50, discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, and instrument reliability testing referring to *Composite Reliability* (CR) and *Cronbach's Alpha* values greater than 0.70. The second stage evaluated the structural model (*inner model*) through analysis of the value R^2 (*R-square*), f^2 (*effect size*), as well as direct hypothesis testing and moderating interaction effects (*product-indicator approach*) using the *bootstrapping* method with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$).

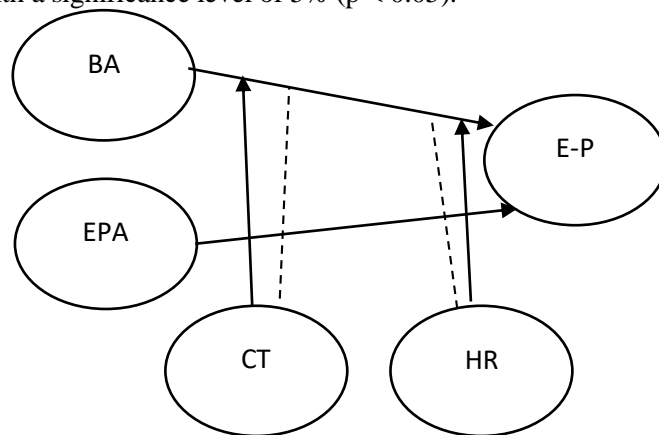


Figure 1. Model

Based on the theoretical framework that has been constructed, the following are the hypotheses proposed in this study:

- H1: Brand awareness *has* a positive and significant effect on purchase intention on *e-commerce* platforms.
- H2: The *effectiveness* of personalized advertising has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention on *e-commerce* platforms.
- H3: Consumer trust *positively* moderates the influence of brand awareness and personalized advertising effectiveness on purchase intention.
- H4: Honest reviews *positively* moderate the influence of brand awareness and personalized advertising effectiveness on purchase intention on *e-commerce* platforms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Results of Measurement Model Testing (Outer Model)

Before testing the structural relationships between variables, an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) was first conducted to ensure that the research instrument used met the validity and reliability criteria required in SEM-PLS analysis. Convergent validity testing was measured based on the loading factor value for each indicator and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. Based on the data processing results, all indicators of the variables Brand Awareness (BA), Personalized Advertising Effectiveness (PAE), Consumer Trust (CT), Honest Reviews (HR), and Purchase Intention (PI) had loading factor values above 0.70, which means each indicator was able to represent its latent variable very well (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the AVE values for all latent constructs were consistently above the parameter threshold of 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance of these indicators can be explained univariately by each variable construct.

The evaluation of the instrument's reliability criteria was carried out rigorously by examining the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values to assess the internal consistency of all

questionnaire items. The computational results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all variables were well above the critical threshold of 0.70. This indicates that all instruments have a very high level of reliability and internal consistency when used under repeated testing conditions (Chin, 2010). Discriminant validity testing was also fulfilled through an evaluation using the Fornell-Larcker cross-correlation matrix approach, where the square root of the AVE for each latent construct was proven to be greater than the correlation value between that construct and other constructs in the research model. A comprehensive summary of the results of the measurement model evaluation (outer model) is presented in depth in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of the Validity and Reliability Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Latent Variables (Constructs)	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.812	0.815	0.862	0.642
	BA2	0.845			
	BA3	0.798			
Personalized Advertising Effectiveness (PAE)	PAE1	0.789	0.848	0.891	0.671
	PAE2	0.821			
	PAE3	0.854			
	PAE4	0.802			
Consumer Trust (CT)	CT1	0.834	0.832	0.884	0.693
	CT2	0.867			
	CT3	0.811			
Honest Reviews (HR)	HR1	0.856	0.861	0.901	0.735
	HR2	0.889			
	HR3	0.842			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.801	0.855	0.896	0.683
	PI2	0.835			
	PI3	0.872			
	PI4	0.824			
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.812	0.815	0.862	0.642
	BA2	0.845			
	BA3	0.798			

Results of Structural Model Testing (Inner Model) and Hypothesis

After the measurement model is confirmed to be valid and reliable, the next step is to evaluate the structural model (*inner model*) to test the predictive power of the conceptual model that was built. Evaluate the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) on the dependent variable shows a value of 0.684, which indicates that the variation in the value of *the Purchase Intention* (PI) construct can be explained by 68.4% by the combination of the variables *Brand Awareness*, *Personalized Advertising Effectiveness*, and the interaction effect of the moderating variables *Consumer Trust* and *Honest Reviews*. The remaining 31.6%

of the variance is explained by exogenous factors outside the structural model of this study (Henseler et al., 2015). Hypothesis testing is carried out by running the *bootstrapping* algorithm with a number of dummy samples (*subsamples*) of 5,000 times to produce the path coefficient value, the value text-statistics, and value accurately at the level of significance 5%.

The *direct effect* test shows that *Brand Awareness* (BA) has a positive and significant effect on *Purchase Intention* (PI) ($B = 0,314$; $t = 4,892$; $p < 0,001$), so that H1 is accepted. The same thing was also found in the testing of the *Personalized Advertising Effectiveness* (PAE) variable which was proven to have a positive and very significant direct influence on *Purchase Intention* (PI) ($B = 0,387$; $t = 5,614$; $p < 0,001$), which means H2 is accepted. For testing the moderation effect (*interaction effect*), the *bootstrapping* results confirm that the interaction between *Personalized Advertising* and *Consumer Trust* (PAE X CT) has a significant impact on purchase intention ($B = 0,215$; $t = 3,421$; $p = 0,001$), validates that H3 is accepted. Finally, the interaction between personalized advertising and honest reviews (PAE X HR) has also been proven to have a very significant moderating effect ($B = 0,268$; $t = 4,103$; $p < 0,001$), so that H4 is accepted. A summary of the results of the hypothesis testing is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. A Summary Of The Results Of The Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Structural Relationships Between Variables	Path Coefficient (β)	t - statistics	p - values	Decision Status
H1	Brand Awareness (BA) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.314	4,892	< 0.001	Accepted
H2	Personalized Advertising Effect. (PAE) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.387	5,614	< 0.001	Accepted
H3	Interaction: PAE X Consumer Trust (CT) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.215	3,421	0.001	Accepted
H4	Interaction: PAE X Honest Reviews (HR) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.268	4,103	< 0.001	Accepted

Discussion

Contribution of Brand Awareness in the Digital Market Space

The empirical findings of this study conclusively demonstrate that brand awareness *plays* a fundamental role in triggering consumer purchase intention within the *e-commerce* platform ecosystem. The successful acceptance of H1 confirms traditional consumer-based brand equity theory, which posits that consumers' memory familiarity with a brand acts as a primary cognitive filter when faced with a sea of product information (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). In the world of digital commerce, where thousands of new products appear every second, consumers face functional anxiety regarding the authenticity of goods and the reliability of delivery services. Strong brand awareness acts as a psychological "safety anchor" that reduces the perceived risk of such transactions, making consumers feel much safer placing their purchase intention on a brand they already know (Al-Dhuhli & Ismael, 2024).

Furthermore, in the context of *online* shopping platforms, the brand awareness dimension is not limited to the visual memory of the logo alone, but rather evolves into a perception of digital reputation built through the existence of the online store's track record. Previous researchers have suggested that digital consumers utilize their collective memory of a brand name to expedite the process of eliminating irrelevant options in the search results pages of *e-commerce* platforms (Wu & Li, 2023). When a brand has a strong popularity and memory in the minds of consumers, the probability of that brand being included in the shopping cart list is many times higher. This finding practically indicates that shop owners on *e-commerce* platforms should not prioritize long-term investment in building brand awareness, as this cognitive variable is the gateway to the effectiveness of other digital marketing stimuli.

Personalized Advertising Effectiveness and Consumer Cognitive Relevance

The statistical test results for H2 indicate that personalized advertising effectiveness *is* the most dominant direct predictor in influencing consumer purchase intention on *e-commerce* platforms. This is in line with the premise of contemporary attention economics, which states that contextually relevant advertising has a much higher appeal compared to conventional mass advertising (Smith & Johnson, 2024). The sophisticated targeting algorithms that work behind *e-commerce* platforms enable advertisements to

be projected directly onto consumers' device screens at precisely the right time when consumers are searching for solutions to a specific problem or need. This targeting accuracy based on browsing history and interests creates a very high cognitive utility value for consumers, which ultimately triggers instant interest and encourages the formation of strong purchase intention (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

The strong positive impact of ad personalization confirms that advances in machine learning technology have successfully transformed advertising from an *intrusive annoyance* to a valuable informational aid. When consumers perceive that advertising content deeply understands their personal needs, their information search time is drastically reduced, directly accelerating their mental transition from mere awareness of a product to a strong intention to purchase it (Kumar & Tan, 2024). However, this high direct impact coefficient also carries the potential danger of psychological fatigue if the frequency of personalized ads is excessive. Therefore, digital marketers must precisely measure the saturation limit of ad targeting so that this high technological accuracy remains positively perceived by users and does not trigger cognitive rejection due to visual saturation.

The Crucial Role of Consumer Trust as an Internal Catalyst

One of the most important original contributions of this study lies in proving H3, where consumer trust *is* confirmed to have a positive and significant moderating role in strengthening the relationship between the effectiveness of personalized advertising and purchase intention. This finding provides a theoretical solution to the academic debate regarding the personalization-privacy paradox. As stated by Aguirre et al. (2015), excessive algorithm reliability often makes consumers feel spied on, which triggers suspicion and instantly kills their purchase intention. This is where consumer trust comes in as an antidote to these fears; when *e-commerce* platforms and brands have successfully secured the credibility of data integrity in the eyes of their users, consumers will tolerate such personal data collection and ignore their privacy concerns in favor of the benefits of relevant advertising (Chang & Wong, 2024).

The psychological mechanism of this moderating effect suggests that *consumer trust* acts as an emotional filter. When consumer trust is at a premium, consumers tend to attribute personalized ad targeting to a professional brand service (*customer care alignment*). Conversely, among consumers with low trust, identical personalized ads are perceived as an exploitative cyber-espionage threat, leading to discontinuation of the shopping interaction (Pavlou, 2003). Practically, these findings send a strong signal to *e-commerce* platform management that multi-million-dollar algorithm investments in ad personalization will be wasted and fail to convert purchase intentions if the platform fails to maintain user trust, both in terms of payment system security and consumer data privacy policies.

Honest Reviews as an Anchor for External Social Validation

The statistical analysis results for H4 empirically confirm that honest reviews *play* a powerful external social moderating role in amplifying the influence of personalized advertising effectiveness on consumer purchase intentions. This phenomenon can be explained theoretically using the *signaling theory* framework in the digital business environment, where user reviews act as independent second-order signals that verify the validity of first-order signals released by companies through commercial advertising (Mavlanova et al., 2012). No matter how sophisticated personalized advertising is, consumers still perceive it as a one-sided claim from a manufacturer with hidden profit interests. However, when these personalized advertising claims are validated and reinforced by hundreds of objective, honest reviews from fellow consumers in the testimonial column, information asymmetry will collapse and consumer confidence in purchasing the product will increase dramatically (Park & Kim, 2025).

The powerful moderating effect of *honest reviews* also demonstrates that purchase intention conversion in the modern digital era is driven by the democratic concept of social confirmation. Contemporary consumers tend to compare the sweet promises of advertising with the objective reality presented by previous buyers, particularly regarding the suitability of the item's physical specifications, color accuracy, and seller response speed. The presence of transparent reviews—even those that include minor criticisms but are handled responsibly by the seller in fact, increases the credibility of the online store in the eyes of potential buyers (Wu & Li, 2023). Conversely, if a highly engaging personalized ad appears on a user's screen but when clicked, the store has no reviews or is dominated by fake, manipulated reviews, consumer purchase intention will evaporate instantly. This confirms that the honesty of the social review ecosystem is a crucial factor in determining whether ad personalization technology will result in real profitable conversions or simply wasted click impressions.

CONCLUSION

This study has empirically proven that brand awareness *and* personalized advertising effectiveness are two main determinants that directly drive increased consumer *purchase intention on e-commerce* platforms. The presence of a well-known brand name in consumers' long-term memory has been shown to reduce transactional anxiety and act as a cognitive anchor that cuts through the complexity of searching for product information. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of personalized advertising driven by the accuracy of advanced data targeting algorithms has been shown to be the most dominant predictor because it is able to present contextual and adaptive information utility value to the actual needs of each individual consumer at the right moment.

The most important theoretical contribution of this research lies in the testing of moderating interaction effects that confirm the crucial role of consumer trust *as* an internal psychological catalyst of the system. High levels of consumer trust can act as an antidote to privacy concerns stemming from the personalization -*privacy* paradox, where consumers are willing to tolerate data algorithm tracking because the platform is perceived to have good data security integrity. Furthermore, this research also validates the role of honest reviews *as* a powerful anchor of external social validation in amplifying the impact of commercial advertising messages. The synergy between the accuracy of personalized advertising from manufacturers and transparent social confirmation from the community of previous buyers is proven to be effective in breaking down information asymmetry and accelerating consumer purchase intention conversion decisions.

Practically, the results of this study provide valuable managerial recommendations for *e-commerce* industry players and digital marketers to avoid being trapped solely in investment in ad targeting algorithm technology. Exploiting consumer data through highly personalized advertising will be futile or even trigger resistance if platforms ignore user trust governance and allow the product review ecosystem to be polluted by information manipulation. To maintain long-term business sustainability in a hyper-competitive digital market, companies must formulate ethical data-driven marketing strategies that balance the sophistication of technological computing, data privacy transparency, and honest social proof to build healthy and accountable customer relationships.

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