



## **How Digital Advertising Exposure Translates Into Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Advertising Content Evaluation**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Digital Platform digital terus-menerus menyajikan iklan merek kepada konsumen; namun, intensitas kontak yang lebih tinggi tidak selalu menghasilkan niat beli yang lebih kuat, dan penelitian terdahulu menunjukkan adanya efek paparan yang bersifat positif dalam situasi tertentu namun negatif pada situasi lainnya. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana paparan iklan memengaruhi niat beli, dengan menempatkan evaluasi konsumen terhadap konten iklan sebagai mekanisme perantara (mediator) alih-alih sebagai prediktor yang berdiri sejajar. Data survei *\*cross-sectional\** dari konsumen muda Indonesia untuk sebuah produk bermerek sehari-hari dianalisis menggunakan metode *\*partial least squares structural equation modelling\** (PLS-SEM) dengan analisis efek tidak langsung melalui *\*bootstrapping\**. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa paparan iklan berhubungan dengan evaluasi konten maupun niat beli, dan evaluasi konten berperan sebagai mediator parsial dalam hubungan tersebut. Dengan demikian, jangkauan iklan memberikan peluang bagi terjadinya persuasi, sementara penilaian terhadap konten menentukan apakah peluang tersebut akan berujung pada relevansi perilaku.

**Kata Kunci:** *Paparan Iklan, Evaluasi Konten Iklan, Niat Beli.*

### **ABSTRACT**

Digital platforms deliver brand advertising to consumers continuously, yet greater contact does not reliably yield stronger purchase intention, and prior work reports exposure effects that are positive in some settings and negative in others. This study asks how exposure translates into intention, treating consumers' evaluation of advertising content as the intervening mechanism rather than as a parallel predictor. Cross-sectional survey data from young Indonesian consumers of an everyday branded product were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling with bootstrapped indirect effects. Exposure was associated with content evaluation and with purchase intention, and content evaluation partially mediated that relationship. Advertising reach therefore supplies the opportunity for persuasion, while appraisal of content governs whether that opportunity acquires behavioural relevance

**Keywords:** *Advertising Exposure, Advertising Content Evaluation, Purchase Intention.*

## INTRODUCTION

Digital and social media platforms have become central channels through which brands reach consumers, providing targeted engagement channels that enhance communication efficiency and accelerate the digitalisation of marketing (Liu, 2025). Advertising expenditure directed at these platforms continues to expand, reflecting their growing strategic weight in contemporary marketing practice (Tiwari et al., 2025). Because platform algorithms distribute brand content continuously and at scale, firms can now maintain frequent and readily accessible contact with consumers rather than intermittent campaign-based contact (Liu, 2025). Young consumers are a particularly consequential audience in this environment, being highly active on social media and routinely targeted by brand and influencer content (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026). Evidence from several consumer categories indicates that the attributes of such advertising content are associated with brand attitudes and purchase intention (Liu, 2025; Tiwari et al., 2025). Yet greater contact with digital advertising does not automatically produce stronger purchase intention: attitudinal mediators account for only part of the exposure intention relationship (Alqahtani et al., 2026), and repeated exposure has in some settings been associated with less favourable consumer perceptions (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026). What consumers make of an advertisement, rather than how often they meet it, may therefore be decisive.

Digital advertising exposure denotes the degree of a consumer's contact with, and access to, brand advertising distributed through digital media. Alqahtani et al. (2026) operationalise sponsored advertising exposure through self-reported encounters with branded content across platforms, capturing both the volume of advertising noticed and its distribution across channels. Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) treat frequency of exposure as a distinct construct, measured by how regularly promotional content appears in a consumer's feed, and model it separately from the quality of that content. Empirical evidence on the consequences of exposure is, however, not uniform. Alqahtani et al. (2026) find that attitude only partially mediates the relationship between exposure and purchase intention, with a direct path persisting alongside the mediated one. In contrast, Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) report that frequency of exposure is negatively associated with consumer perception, and interpret this as diminishing effectiveness under repeated influencer content; the corresponding indirect effect on purchase intention is likewise negative. Earlier work anticipates this asymmetry: Lin and Chen (2017) show that irritation operates alongside infotainment in shaping consumer responses to advertising, so that increased advertising contact may generate aversive as well as favourable reactions. Read through the elaboration likelihood framework, in which persuasion depends on how a message is processed rather than on its mere receipt (Tiwari et al., 2025), exposure is best understood as the opportunity for persuasion rather than persuasion itself.

Once an advertisement has been encountered, consumers appraise the properties of the message itself, and this appraisal is the psychological mechanism of interest here. The advertising value tradition holds that consumers assess advertising according to how well it satisfies their informational and affective needs, with informativeness and entertainment shaping attitudes toward the advertisement (Tiwari et al., 2025). Liu (2025) extends this logic to social media content, showing that informativeness, entertainment, interactivity, and authenticity each contribute significantly to purchase intention. Alqahtani et al. (2026) similarly treat advertising content quality as a predictor conceptually and empirically separable from exposure, while Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) measure content quality through visual appeal, production quality, and relevance to consumer interests. The attributes examined in the present study visual attractiveness, memorability, message clarity, and informational relevance fall within this family of content-quality dimensions, although no verified source establishes these four as a single published scale. Favourable appraisal of content is consistently associated with stronger purchase intention: Liu (2025) reports substantial paths from content characteristics to brand attitude and from brand attitude to purchase intention, while Tiwari et al. (2025) find that advertising attitude significantly predicts purchase intention. Mediation is theoretically plausible on this evidence, because exposure supplies contact with the advertisement whereas evaluation determines how that contact is cognitively interpreted before intention forms

(Lin & Chen, 2017; Alqahtani et al., 2026). Consistent with this reading, Liu (2025) finds that indirect effects through psychological mediators exceed the direct influence of content itself.

Although each element of this sequence has been studied, the sequence as a whole has not been clearly resolved. Alqahtani et al. (2026) model advertising exposure and advertising content quality as parallel predictors of purchase intention rather than as an ordered chain, so their design cannot establish whether content appraisal transmits the effect of exposure. Where mediators are specified, they are typically attitudinal rather than evaluative: attitude toward the advertisement in Alqahtani et al. (2026) and Tiwari et al. (2025), and brand attitude together with brand loyalty in Liu (2025). Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) come closest to the present specification by placing exposure and content quality upstream of a perception mediator, but their empirical setting is influencer marketing rather than brand-controlled digital advertising, and their exposure perception coefficient is negative rather than positive. Evidence on the antecedents of content evaluation is itself inconsistent: Tiwari et al. (2025) report that informativeness significantly predicts advertising attitude, yet note that other studies, including Hussain et al. (2022), have found informativeness non-significant for advertising value. The magnitude of mediation also varies, from indirect effects exceeding direct effects in Liu (2025) to partial mediation with a persisting direct path in Alqahtani et al. (2026). Taken together, these findings indicate that it remains insufficiently clear whether, and in which direction, consumers' evaluation of advertising content explains the link between digital advertising exposure and purchase intention, particularly where exposure-related effects may themselves be positive, negative, or subject to saturation.

This study addresses that unresolved mechanism. It examines Digital Advertising Exposure as a predictor of Purchase Intention, specifies Advertising Content Evaluation as a mediator of that relationship, and retains the direct exposure intention path so that any mediated effect is estimated alongside rather than in place of the direct association. Three contributions follow. Mechanistically, the study moves the question from whether digital advertising exposure predicts purchase intention to how exposure may translate into it through consumers' appraisal of advertising content, a sequence that prior designs treating exposure and content quality as parallel predictors could not test (Alqahtani et al., 2026). Conceptually, it separates the level of advertising exposure from the evaluation of advertising attributes rather than combining them into one undifferentiated digital-advertising construct, following the distinction drawn by Alqahtani et al. (2026) and Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026). Empirically, it examines the mechanism among young consumers of an everyday branded product in an emerging-market urban setting in Indonesia, a context underrepresented in the verified literature reviewed above. Accordingly, this study examines how digital advertising exposure is associated with purchase intention and whether advertising content evaluation mediates this relationship among young consumers.

Theoretical and mechanism novelty. Prior verified work models advertising exposure and advertising content quality as parallel predictors of purchase intention (Alqahtani et al., 2026), or specifies attitudinal mediators rather than evaluative ones (Tiwari et al., 2025; Liu, 2025). This study instead orders the constructs sequentially, treating consumers' evaluation of advertising content as the mechanism through which exposure may reach purchase intention, while retaining the direct path so that the mediated and unmediated associations are estimated jointly.

Conceptual novelty. The study separates how much digital advertising consumers perceive themselves to encounter from how favourably they appraise its attributes, rather than combining the two into a single digital-advertising construct. This follows the exposure content distinction drawn by Alqahtani et al. (2026) and Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026), and is directly relevant given that the exposure evaluation relationship is reported as negative in the latter.

Empirical and contextual novelty. The mechanism is examined among young consumers of an everyday branded product in an emerging-market urban setting in Indonesia. This is offered as supporting empirical value, not as the principal novelty; the contribution rests on the unresolved mediating relationship set out above.

## METODE

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional explanatory design to examine the relationships among Digital Advertising Exposure, Advertising Content Evaluation, and Purchase Intention. The final analytical sample comprised 98 respondents aged 15–34 years who were domiciled in West Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Eligible respondents were active social media users and had previously been exposed to digital advertising or influencer-related content concerning Wall's ice cream, as confirmed through screening questions included in the questionnaire. Respondents were selected according to these eligibility criteria, while no specific probability-sampling procedure is claimed because the available study documentation does not establish one. Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the analysis was designed to estimate statistical associations among the constructs rather than establish temporal or causal relationships (Rijnhart et al., 2021).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 16 measurement items distributed across three reflective constructs: Digital Advertising Exposure (four items), Advertising Content Evaluation (four items), and Purchase Intention (eight items). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale; because the verbal anchor for the lowest response category could not be verified from the available materials, no unverified anchor is reported. Particular attention was given to the empirical distinction between Digital Advertising Exposure and Advertising Content Evaluation because the two constructs were reclassified from items originally administered within a single digital-advertising block. Accordingly, the reflective measurement model was evaluated before interpretation of the structural relationships using outer loadings for indicator reliability, Cronbach's alpha,  $\rho_A$ , and composite reliability for internal consistency, and average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity was assessed primarily using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), particularly for the distinction between Digital Advertising Exposure and Advertising Content Evaluation, because HTMT provides a more sensitive assessment of discriminant validity than the traditional Fornell Larcker criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). The eight Purchase Intention indicators were evaluated using the same measurement-quality criteria to establish whether they could be treated as a coherent reflective construct.

The structural model is estimated by partial least squares structural equation modelling in SmartPLS, with Digital Advertising Exposure as the exogenous construct, Advertising Content Evaluation as the mediator, and Purchase Intention as the endogenous construct. The data are screened for out-of-range values and influential cases. The analysis reports path a, from exposure to content evaluation; path b, from content evaluation to purchase intention controlling for exposure; the direct effect c prime, net of the mediator; the total effect c; and the specific indirect effect, the product of a and b. Coefficients are evaluated using two-tailed tests at  $\alpha = .05$ , together with the coefficient of determination for each endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2019). Because the sampling distribution of the product of two coefficients is not normal, the indirect effect is tested through neither the Sobel test nor the causal-steps procedure, and a significant total effect is not a precondition for testing it (MacKinnon et al., 2004). Inference rests instead on a percentile bootstrap confidence interval with 5,000 subsamples, currently the recommended method for indirect effects, which is treated as distinguishable from zero when its 95% interval excludes zero (Rijnhart et al., 2021; Tibbe & Montoya, 2022). Given the cross-sectional design, a non-zero indirect effect is read as an indirect statistical association, not as evidence of a causal mechanism (Rijnhart et al., 2021).

Table 1. Operational definitions and measurement indicators

| Variable and Role | Conceptual Definition                    | Operational Definition in This Study  | Indicator / Dimension     | Item Code | Conceptual / Measurement Source |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Perceived Digital | The extent to which a consumer perceives | Respondents' self-reported perception | Perceived discoverability | X1        | Conceptual grounding: Alqahtani |

| Variable and Role                                                   | Conceptual Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Operational Definition in This Study                                                                                                                                                                         | Indicator / Dimension                                                                                                                                                     | Item Code                        | Conceptual / Measurement Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advertising Exposure (PDAE) Independent Variable (X)                | contact with, and ready access to, a brand's advertising content across digital media. Grounded conceptually in sponsored ad exposure (Alqahtani et al., 2026) and in exposure frequency treated as distinct from content quality (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026).                                                                                                                                                               | of the presence and accessibility of Wall's digital advertising, measured by four items (X1.5 X1.8). Exogenous variable, with a direct path to purchase intention and an indirect path through the mediator. | of the advertisement<br><br>Perceived accessibility through digital media<br><br>Perceived frequency of exposure<br><br>Perceived continuity of digital promotion         | X2<br><br>X3<br><br>X4           | et al. (2026), sponsored ad exposure; Muthulingam & Amirtharaj (2026), frequency of exposure.<br><br>Measurement source: Items reclassified from the original survey dataset; cited literature provides conceptual grounding rather than the original measurement source.                                                                   |
| Perceived Advertising Content Quality (PACQ) Mediating Variable (M) | A consumer's appraisal of the attributes of the advertising message itself, distinct from the degree of contact with it. Grounded in ad content quality as a predictor separable from exposure (Alqahtani et al., 2026), content quality as an antecedent of consumer perception (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026), and content characteristics that reach purchase intention chiefly through psychological mediation (Liu, 2025). | Respondents' rating of four attributes of Wall's digital advertising content. Endogenous mediator between perceived exposure and purchase intention.                                                         | Visual attractiveness<br><br>Memorability of the advertisement design<br><br>Clarity of the promotional message<br><br>Perceived relevance of the advertising information | M1<br><br>M2<br><br>M3<br><br>M4 | Conceptual grounding: Alqahtani et al. (2026), ad content quality; Muthulingam & Amirtharaj (2026), content quality; Liu (2025), brand content characteristics.<br><br>Measurement source: Items reclassified from the original survey dataset; cited literature provides conceptual grounding rather than the original measurement source. |

| Variable and Role                                 | Conceptual Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Operational Definition in This Study                                                                                                                                                                                               | Indicator / Dimension                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Item Code                                    | Conceptual / Measurement Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purchase Intention (PI)<br>Dependent Variable (Y) | A consumer's motivational inclination to engage in a specific purchase; it does not equate to actual purchase behaviour but guides consumer decision-making (Liu, 2025; Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026). Advertising-related evaluations reach purchase intention through evaluative and attitudinal mediators (Lin & Chen, 2017; Alqahtani et al., 2026). | Respondents' stated willingness to seek information about, try, consider, select, purchase, or repurchase Wall's products after exposure to its digital promotion, measured by eight items (Y1 Y8). Endogenous dependent variable. | Information-seeking interest<br>Trial intention following digital promotion<br>Curiosity-driven trial interest<br>Purchase consideration<br>Brand consideration within the category<br>Repurchase intention<br>Near-term purchase intention<br>Brand preference over competitors | Y1<br>Y2<br>Y3<br>Y4<br>Y5<br>Y6<br>Y7<br>Y8 | Conceptual grounding: Liu (2025); Muthulingam & Amirtharaj (2026); Lin & Chen (2017). Purchase intention is an established theoretical construct, but items Y1 Y8 cannot be attributed to any published measurement scale. Measurement source: Items reclassified from the original survey dataset; cited literature provides conceptual grounding rather than the original measurement source. |

## HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

### 1. Respondent Characteristics

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

| Characteristic | Category     | n  | %      |
|----------------|--------------|----|--------|
| Gender         | Male         | 50 | 51.02  |
|                | Female       | 48 | 48.98  |
|                | Total Gender | 98 | 100.00 |
| Age            | 15 19 years  | 20 | 20.41  |
|                | 20 24 years  | 39 | 39.80  |
|                | 25 29 years  | 22 | 22.45  |
|                | 30 34 years  | 17 | 17.35  |
| Total Age      |              | 98 | 100.00 |

|            |                      |    |        |
|------------|----------------------|----|--------|
| Occupation | Student              | 11 | 11.22  |
|            | University student   | 37 | 37.76  |
|            | Employee             | 34 | 34.69  |
|            | Entrepreneur         | 11 | 11.22  |
|            | Other                | 5  | 5.10   |
| Residence  | Banjarmasin District | 98 | 100.00 |

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The respondent profile shows a nearly balanced gender distribution, with 50 males (51.02%) and 48 females (48.98%). The largest age group was 20–24 years (39.80%), followed by 25–29 years (22.45%), 15–19 years (20.41%), and 30–34 years (17.35%). Regarding occupation, university students constituted the largest proportion (37.76%), followed by employees (34.69%), while students and entrepreneurs each represented 11.22%, and other occupations accounted for 5.10%. All 98 respondents were domiciled in Banjarmasin District

## 2. Participants and Data Collection

Table 3. Measurement Model Assessment

| Abbr.                        |                                                    | OL    | CA    | RO    | CR    | AVE   |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Digital Advertising Exposure |                                                    |       | 0.715 | 0.722 | 0.824 | 0.541 |
| X1                           | Perceived discoverability of the advertisement     | 0.806 |       |       |       |       |
| X2                           | Perceived accessibility through digital media      | 0.718 |       |       |       |       |
| X3                           | Perceived frequency of exposure                    | 0.758 |       |       |       |       |
| X4                           | Perceived continuity of digital promotion          | 0.652 |       |       |       |       |
| Advertising Content Quality  |                                                    |       | 0.746 | 0.748 | 0.840 | 0.567 |
| M1                           | Visual attractiveness                              | 0.784 |       |       |       |       |
| M2                           | Memorability of the advertisement design           | 0.756 |       |       |       |       |
| M3                           | Clarity of the promotional message                 | 0.716 |       |       |       |       |
| M4                           | Perceived relevance of the advertising information | 0.754 |       |       |       |       |
| Purchase Intention           |                                                    |       | 0.858 | 0.859 | 0.890 | 0.502 |
| Y1                           | Information-seeking interest                       | 0.712 |       |       |       |       |
| Y2                           | Trial intention following digital promotion        | 0.745 |       |       |       |       |
| Y3                           | Curiosity-driven trial interest                    | 0.720 |       |       |       |       |
| Y4                           | Purchase consideration                             | 0.702 |       |       |       |       |
| Y5                           | Brand consideration within the category            | 0.731 |       |       |       |       |
| Y6                           | Repurchase intention                               | 0.706 |       |       |       |       |
| Y7                           | Near-term purchase intention                       | 0.668 |       |       |       |       |
| Y8                           | Brand preference over competitors                  | 0.682 |       |       |       |       |

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity after indicators with comparatively low loadings were removed. Outer loadings for the retained indicators ranged from 0.703 to 0.804. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.712 to 0.830, rho\_A from 0.714 to 0.831, and composite reliability from 0.839 to 0.876, indicating adequate internal consistency. In addition, AVE values ranged from 0.541 to 0.634, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 and supporting convergent validity. Accordingly, the retained indicators were considered adequate for subsequent structural model assessment.

Table 4. Measurement Model Assessment

| Abbr.                        | OL    | CA    | RO    | CR    | AVE | VIF |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| Digital Advertising Exposure | 0.712 | 0.714 | 0.839 | 0.634 |     |     |

|                             |                                                    |       |       |       |       |       |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| X1                          | Perceived discoverability of the advertisement     | 0.804 |       |       |       | 1.356 |
| X2                          | Perceived accessibility through digital media      | 0.794 |       |       |       | 1.393 |
| X3                          | Perceived frequency of exposure                    | 0.790 |       |       |       | 1.437 |
| Advertising Content Quality |                                                    |       | 0.746 | 0.751 | 0.839 | 0.567 |
| M1                          | Visual attractiveness                              | 0.786 |       |       |       | 1.552 |
| M2                          | Memorability of the advertisement design           | 0.764 |       |       |       | 1.373 |
| M3                          | Clarity of the promotional message                 | 0.707 |       |       |       | 1.398 |
| M4                          | Perceived relevance of the advertising information | 0.752 |       |       |       | 1.407 |
| Purchase Intention          |                                                    |       | 0.830 | 0.831 | 0.876 | 0.541 |
| Y1                          | Information-seeking interest                       | 0.717 |       |       |       | 1.571 |
| Y2                          | Trial intention following digital promotion        | 0.776 |       |       |       | 1.839 |
| Y3                          | Curiosity-driven trial interest                    | 0.751 |       |       |       | 1.671 |
| Y4                          | Purchase consideration                             | 0.703 |       |       |       | 1.558 |
| Y5                          | Brand consideration within the category            | 0.743 |       |       |       | 1.618 |
| Y6                          | Repurchase intention                               | 0.720 |       |       |       | 1.561 |

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Outer loadings ranged from 0.703 to 0.804, indicating adequate indicator reliability. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.712 to 0.830, rho\_A from 0.714 to 0.831, and composite reliability from 0.839 to 0.876, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. The AVE values ranged from 0.541 to 0.634, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 and confirming convergent validity. In addition, all VIF values ranged from 1.356 to 1.839, indicating no problematic collinearity among the retained indicators. Overall, the measurement model was considered adequate for subsequent structural model assessment

### 3. Assessment of the Structural Inner Model

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

| Konstruk Endogen                   | R Square ( $R^2$ ) | Adjusted $R^2$ |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Advertising Content Evaluation (M) | 0.572              | 0.567          |
| Purchase Intention (Y)             | 0.789              | 0.785          |

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The coefficient of determination indicates that Digital Advertising Exposure explains 57.2% of the variance in Advertising Content Evaluation ( $R^2 = 0.572$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.567$ ). In addition, Digital Advertising Exposure and Advertising Content Evaluation jointly explain 78.9% of the variance in Purchase Intention ( $R^2 = 0.789$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.785$ ). These results indicate that the structural model has substantial explanatory power for both endogenous constructs.

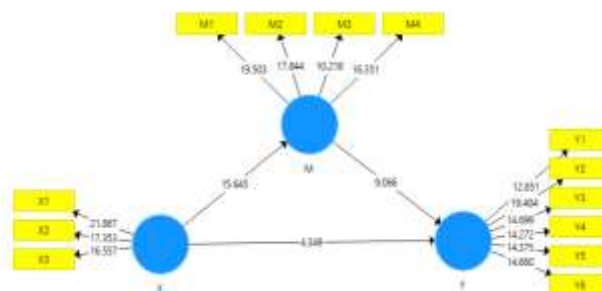


Figure 1. Bootstrapped Structural Model Showing the Relationships among Digital Advertising Exposure, Advertising Content Evaluation, and Purchase Intention

The bootstrapped structural model shows that all direct paths are statistically significant. Digital Advertising Exposure is strongly associated with Advertising Content Evaluation ( $t = 15.645$ ), while Advertising Content Evaluation is significantly associated with Purchase Intention ( $t = 9.066$ ). Digital Advertising Exposure also retains a significant direct relationship with Purchase Intention ( $t = 4.349$ ). These results indicate that the proposed structural relationships are empirically supported and provide a basis for the subsequent hypothesis testing and mediation analysis.

#### 4. Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Hypothesized Relationship                                                                 | Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | t value | p value | Decision  |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | Digital Advertising Exposure on Advertising Content Evaluation                            | 0.756                        | 15.645  | < 0.001 | Supported |
| H2         | Digital Advertising Exposure on Purchase Intention                                        | 0.313                        | 4.349   | < 0.001 | Supported |
| H3         | Advertising Content Evaluation on Purchase Intention                                      | 0.627                        | 9.066   | < 0.001 | Supported |
| H4         | Digital Advertising Exposure on Purchase Intention through Advertising Content Evaluation | 0.474                        | 7.847   | < 0.001 | Supported |

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The hypothesis testing results show that all four proposed relationships are statistically significant. Digital Advertising Exposure is positively associated with Advertising Content Evaluation ( $\beta = 0.756$ ,  $t = 15.645$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H1. Digital Advertising Exposure also has a significant direct relationship with Purchase Intention ( $\beta = 0.313$ ,  $t = 4.349$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H2, while Advertising Content Evaluation is strongly associated with Purchase Intention ( $\beta = 0.627$ ,  $t = 9.066$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H3. The indirect effect of Digital Advertising Exposure on Purchase Intention through Advertising Content Evaluation is also significant ( $\beta = 0.474$ ,  $t = 7.847$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H4. Since both the direct and indirect effects remain significant, the results indicate a partial mediation pattern, suggesting that Advertising Content Evaluation explains part, but not all, of the relationship between Digital Advertising Exposure and Purchase Intention.

#### 5. Discussion

All four hypothesised relationships were supported, and the overall configuration of the model is more instructive than any individual path. The results indicate that exposure to digital advertising and evaluation of advertising content behave as empirically distinct constructs rather than as two labels for the same underlying phenomenon. Digital Advertising Exposure was positively associated with Advertising Content Evaluation, and both constructs were positively associated with Purchase Intention but Advertising Content Evaluation exhibited the larger estimated association with Purchase Intention, while the direct association of exposure with intention, though significant, was more modest. Because no formal coefficient-difference test was performed, this ordering is descriptive rather than inferential and should be read as a pattern to be interpreted, not a hierarchy to be asserted. What the pattern suggests is that consumer response depends not merely on whether an advertisement is encountered but on how the encountered content is appraised once it enters attention. Framed in dual-process terms, exposure appears to supply the opportunity for persuasion, while content evaluation appears to govern whether that opportunity is converted into behavioural readiness (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Alqahtani et al., 2026).

The significance of the exposure evaluation relationship is best explained by the fact that evaluation is logically and psychologically downstream of encounter: a consumer cannot form an appraisal of advertising content that has never entered their perceptual field. Exposure therefore functions as an enabling condition that

supplies the raw evaluative material visual execution, message claims, product information on which any judgement of attractiveness, clarity, or relevance must be based. Beyond mere availability, repeated encounter is associated with increased perceptual fluency: content that has been processed before is processed more easily on subsequent occasions, and this ease of processing is commonly experienced as a positive affective signal that consumers attribute to the stimulus rather than to their own cognitive facility (Zajonc, 1968). A third mechanism is specific to digital environments. Because algorithmic delivery is targeted rather than random, greater exposure in a digital feed is typically not exposure to arbitrary content but to content selected for congruence with a user's inferred interests. Exposure and relevance are thus partially confounded by design, which plausibly strengthens the observed association in ways that would not obtain under conditions of untargeted mass broadcast. This positive result must nevertheless be reported against genuinely contradictory evidence rather than presented as inevitable. Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) found frequency of exposure to be negatively associated with consumers' perception of authenticity, credibility, and relevance among Generation Z respondents, interpreting this as evidence of content fatigue. Alwreikat and Rjoub (2020) reported that advertising wear-out was associated with heightened irritation and perceived intrusiveness, and Attiq et al. (2026) documented a pathway in which intrusive and irritating advertising is associated with anger, perceived threat to autonomy, and subsequent avoidance behaviour. Lin and Chen (2017) similarly found irritation to be negatively associated with advertising attitudes. Montoya et al. (2017), meta-analysing the mere exposure literature, concluded that the exposure liking relationship is fundamentally curvilinear: it rises, peaks, and then declines. The most defensible reconciliation is that the present sample reflects the ascending region of that function, where exposure is experienced as accessibility rather than as saturation. That interpretation is a boundary condition offered for testing, not a demonstrated mechanism, and the finding should be read as evidence that exposure can accompany favourable evaluation under the conditions represented here not that increasing advertising frequency without limit improves how content is judged.

The two direct paths to Purchase Intention are best interpreted jointly, because each explains a different part of the same process. Exposure retained a significant direct association with intention, and there are coherent reasons why it should. Frequent encounter builds brand salience, so that an advertised option is more likely to be retrieved at the moment a need is recognised; familiarity reduces the perceived uncertainty attached to an unknown alternative; and exposure performs a discovery function, informing consumers that a product exists and where it can be obtained. None of these routes requires effortful message evaluation, which is precisely why persuasion theory treats them as peripheral or heuristic (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Alqahtani et al. (2026) likewise observed that a direct exposure intention path persisted even after an evaluative mediator was introduced. Advertising Content Evaluation, however, exhibited the larger estimated association with intention, and this too is theoretically intelligible. Evaluation is the proximal, decision-relevant construct: it registers whether the advertisement was visually attractive, memorable, clear, and personally relevant, and each of those judgements supplies something that exposure alone cannot a reason to act. Visual attractiveness sustains attention long enough for message content to be processed; memorability increases the probability of retrieval at the decision point; clarity reduces the cognitive cost of understanding the offer; and relevance connects the offer to the consumer's own circumstances, converting an impression into a candidate purchase. Ducoffe's (1995) advertising value framework captures this logic directly: consumers assess advertising against their informational and affective needs, and it is that assessment, not the encounter itself, which carries evaluative weight. Convergent evidence appears across contexts content quality associated with perception and perception with intention (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026); content characteristics associated with brand attitude and attitude with intention (Liu, 2025); aesthetic appeal and interactivity associated with perceived advertising value (Hussain et al., 2022); informativeness, entertainment, and credibility associated with advertising attitude and thence with intention (Tiware et al., 2025). The conceptual implication is that reach and quality are not substitutes: a consumer may meet an advertisement repeatedly without ever finding it persuasive. A caveat is nonetheless warranted about which evaluative construct is decisive, since

Sharma et al. (2022) found perceived advertising value to outperform attitude toward the advertisement in predicting purchase intention evidence that appraisal constructs are not interchangeable and that the present operationalisation is one defensible specification among several.

The mediation result is the analytical centre of the study and requires the most careful statement. The indirect association running from exposure through content evaluation to purchase intention was statistically significant, supporting the hypothesised mechanism. This inference rests on the explicit test of the indirect effect rather than on the joint significance of the constituent paths a distinction that contemporary guidance treats as essential (Memon et al., 2018), and one that matters practically, since Liu (2025) described an attitude pathway as full mediation while simultaneously reporting significant direct effects. Because the direct exposure intention path here remained significant alongside the significant indirect path, the appropriate characterisation is partial mediation: content evaluation statistically accounts for part, but not all, of the relationship. The theoretical reasoning behind this pattern is that exposure and evaluation answer different questions. Exposure establishes only that a message was received; it is silent on how the message was interpreted. Content evaluation captures the appraisal that follows reception, and a favourable appraisal therefore represents one mechanism through which encountering advertising becomes behaviourally consequential. Two qualifications constrain how far this can be pressed. First, the data are cross-sectional and self-reported, so the indirect association is consistent with the proposed mechanism but cannot demonstrate that exposure produces evaluation, or evaluation intention, in temporal sequence; reverse orderings in which consumers already favourably disposed attend more to, and recall more of, the relevant advertising remain plausible, a limitation that Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) and Liu (2025) acknowledge for their own designs. Second, the surviving direct path indicates that exposure operates through routes this model did not capture. Prior work identifies several plausible candidates: attitude toward the advertisement (Lin & Chen, 2017; Alqahtani et al., 2026; Tiwari et al., 2025), trust in the message source (Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026), brand loyalty (Liu, 2025), and perceived advertising value together with electronic word-of-mouth (Hussain et al., 2022). None of these was measured here; they are named as plausible parallel mechanisms and directions for extension, not as findings of this study. Indeed, partial rather than complete mediation is arguably the expected outcome whenever a single appraisal construct is asked to represent a persuasion environment in which cognitive, affective, and heuristic routes operate simultaneously.

The contribution of this study lies in disaggregating two processes that digital-advertising research frequently collapses into a single broad construct being exposed to advertising, and evaluating the content that exposure delivers. Holding them apart shifts the research question from whether digital advertising is associated with purchase intention toward how that association is constituted. The novelty is accordingly mechanistic rather than contextual: Advertising Content Evaluation functions as an intervening variable that helps explain how exposure comes to be associated with intention, while the persistence of a significant direct path establishes that this mechanism is partial rather than exclusive. For practitioners the implication is bounded but clear. Investment in visibility alone may be insufficient, and given evidence that repetition past a threshold is associated with irritation, intrusiveness, and avoidance (Alwreikat & Rjoub, 2020; Attiq et al., 2026) may become self-defeating. Campaigns that pair adequate visibility with visually attractive presentation, memorable execution, clear promotional messaging, and information relevant to the recipient are more consistent with the pattern observed here and with converging evidence on content characteristics (Hussain et al., 2022; Liu, 2025; Tiwari et al., 2025). These are directional inferences drawn from cross-sectional associations, not calibrated prescriptions about optimal frequency, budget allocation, or creative specification, none of which this design can supply. What the findings do support is a more process-oriented understanding of digital advertising effectiveness, in which reach is treated as an enabling condition and content evaluation as one of the mechanisms through which that condition acquires behavioural meaning.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how exposure to digital advertising becomes associated with consumers' purchase intention, and to test whether evaluation of advertising content helps explain that association. All four hypothesised relationships were supported. Digital Advertising Exposure was positively associated with Advertising Content Evaluation, both constructs were positively associated with Purchase Intention, and the indirect pathway running from exposure through evaluation to intention was statistically significant. Because the direct exposure–intention relationship remained significant alongside this indirect pathway, the result is properly characterised as partial mediation: content evaluation accounts for part, but not all, of the relationship between encountering advertising and being willing to buy. The substantive lesson is that exposure and evaluation are not interchangeable. Exposure supplies the conditions under which persuasion becomes possible it places a message within reach, builds familiarity, and makes a product retrievable at the moment a need arises while evaluation determines whether the encountered content is judged attractive, clear, memorable, and personally relevant enough to warrant consideration. Digital advertising effectiveness therefore cannot be understood by asking how often advertising reaches consumers without also asking how that advertising is appraised once it arrives.

The study's contribution is accordingly mechanistic rather than merely confirmatory: it separates two processes that digital advertising research often treats as one, and identifies content evaluation as an intervening though not exclusive route through which exposure acquires behavioural relevance. For practitioners, this implies that expanding visibility alone is unlikely to be sufficient, and that visibility is most productively paired with attentive investment in visual presentation, message clarity, and audience relevance. Several limitations bound these conclusions. The design is cross-sectional and based on self-reported measures, so the findings establish statistical association consistent with the proposed mechanism rather than causal or temporal ordering, and alternative sequences cannot be excluded. The surviving direct pathway further indicates that mechanisms not modelled here among them brand familiarity, recall, trust, and perceived value may also carry the influence of exposure. Longitudinal or experimental designs, extension of the model to include these additional intervening constructs, and replication across product categories and exposure intensities would allow the process identified here to be specified with greater confidence.

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