

Impact of Content Marketing Tools on Purchasing Intention: Using Smart-PLS

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of content marketing tools on the purchasing intentions of rural Indian customers. It specifically considers four vital aspects of content marketing- Engage Sphere, Promo Sphere, Info Vault, and Visual Information- and their impact on purchase intention, considering gender as a moderator. This research develops and tests a conceptual model to clarify these connections. Data were collected from 500 participants across five northern states of India through an online survey. The findings indicate that Engage Sphere, Promo Sphere, and Visual Information have a significant positive effect on purchase intention, whereas Info Vault has a significant negative effect. Gender influences Info Vault and Promo Sphere's purchase intent. However, gender does not influence the connections between purchase intention and Visual Information and Engage Sphere. This article advances content marketing research, particularly for rural customers in developing nations, and provides strategic insights for marketers and consumers.

Keywords: Content Marketing, Engage Sphere, Info Vault, Promo Sphere, Purchase Intention, Rural India, Smart-PLS, Visual Information.

1. Introduction

Content marketing has evolved over the last few years from a supported approach to a vital part of digital marketing. The development of mobile technologies and the internet has transformed how companies engage consumers, shifting attention from traditional marketing techniques to content-based approaches that offer value beyond simply the product or service (Pulizzi, 2012). As Wulf et al. (2006) and Rowley (2008) argued, content quality has a significant influence on the attractiveness of interactions between buyers and sellers, affecting consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust. Content marketing is defined as a strategic approach aimed at creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a particular audience and foster profitable consumer behavior at the end (Content Marketing Institute, 2020). As highlighted by Gagnon and Sabus in 2014, creating original and useful content has turned into a key objective for businesses that attract and convert audiences in the digital landscape.

In developed nations, content marketing has seen significant integration into mainstream marketing strategies. However, in developing nations such as India, particularly in its rural areas, this tactic is still relatively new. Rural involvement through content marketing is now both feasible and necessary, given that mobile phones are increasingly the first screen for consumers (Nedumaran, 2016) and digital platforms such as social media allow for real-time and multi-directional communication (Swain and Cao, 2014).

Rural consumers represent a significant yet underexplored segment for marketers. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO, 2021) states that more than 65% of India's overall population lives in rural regions, presenting a significant opportunity for market growth. As noted by Kucuk and Krishnamurthy (2007), content marketing plays a vital role by engaging and empowering consumers through useful and reliable information, especially in areas where traditional ads may not resonate or reach the audience effectively. This highlights the importance of examining how rural consumers, whose digital literacy, financial conditions and behaviors are different from urban consumers who engage with content marketing strategies.

Many businesses in the banking, education, tourism, agriculture and FMCG sectors have begun using content marketing strategies to access rural consumers and to share product information, customer stories, educational content and promotional offers. According to the German Marketing Association (as mentioned in Atkinson and Bench-Capon 2021), around 70% of marketers are utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to share their content marketing messages. This trend highlights a movement towards more accessible and social

formats. However, the effectiveness of different content marketing tools, which include interactive types and visually appealing videos, has not been thoroughly examined in rural India.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the impact of content marketing tools on the purchase intention of rural consumers. It specifically divides content marketing into four main categories: Engage Sphere (such as Websites, user-generated content/reviews and Social media platforms), Promo Sphere (like influencers and paid advertising), Info Vault (including Web blogs, case studies, E-books/magazines and Newsletters) and Visual Information (for example, videos and infographics/picture plus text). Holliman and Rowley (2014) state that successful content marketing does not directly sell but instead prioritizes the interests of consumers, which fits perfectly with this classification approach. This study evaluates a structural model through Smart-PLS 4.0.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents literature review in the paper. In Section 3, the conceptual model, hypothesis development and the approach are described, including sampling, measurement and analytical instruments. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 provides a comprehensive discussion. Section 6 outlines theoretical and managerial implications and Section 7 concludes with future research directions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Content marketing

Over the decades, the idea of content marketing has changed dramatically. It has evolved from being a secondary approach to a formal strategic discipline in digital marketing. According to Holliman and Rowley (2014), Content marketing is a pull-based approach that provides a choice to interruption-based advertising by means of which relationships are developed via insightful content. Consistent distribution of interesting, educational, or insightful material might help companies build consumer trust and brand loyalty over time.

Consumers feel more empowered due to these changes and seek control over the content they consume. Consumers now actively participate in the content consumption and sharing ecosystem rather than passively receiving brand communications. Content marketing enables companies to develop brand awareness, establish thought leadership and encourage consumer loyalty in such an environment (Chaffey and Smith, 2017).

2.2 Classification of content marketing tools

This study classifies content marketing tools into four different categories depending on the present body of knowledge:

2.2.1 Engage Sphere – Engage Sphere refers to digital environments such as websites and interactive platforms that facilitate user engagement and information exchange between organizations and consumers. It includes user-driven or participatory platforms such as company websites, user-generated content and social media pages. Two-way communication and brand involvement are enabled by these platforms (Gummerus et al., 2012). But the efficacy of engagement could change depending on the consumer's level of digital skills. Interactive digital platforms serve as important touchpoints where consumers search for product information, evaluate alternatives, and interact with brand content (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2012). Recent studies demonstrate that interactive website features such as personalization, recommendation systems, and interactive tools significantly improve user engagement and perceived utility, which in turn have a positive impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Bilgihan et al., 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Moreover, digital channels function as central platforms that combine various content types, namely textual, visual, and interactive content, enhancing consumer access to information and deepening brand-consumer relationships (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Empirical evidence indicates that the primary sources for digital information discovery and access are search engines and business websites, demonstrating their importance in consumer information search and engagement activities. Therefore, interactive digital platforms play an essential part in determining consumer perceptions and purchase intentions in digital marketing environments.

2.2.2 Promo Sphere – Promo Sphere refers to promotional digital content distributed through social media platforms, paid advertisements, and influencer collaborations to attract consumer attention and encourage purchase decisions. Social media campaigns and influencer marketing have become effective strategies in the digital sphere for increasing brand exposure and consumer engagement (Djafarova & Bowes, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Promotional content published by businesses or influencers has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions because it fosters trust, credibility, and perceived value (Lou & Yuan, 2018; Chen et al., 2024). Interesting

promotional content on social media platforms may also help businesses connect with more people and strengthen their relationships with customers (Appel et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

2.2.3 Info Vault – Info Vault includes in-depth informational material including newsletters, case studies, blogs, magazines and eBooks that give customers thorough and reliable knowledge on goods or services. These tools provide value through knowledge and education (Rowley, 2008). Reducing uncertainty and helping customers assess options throughout the decision-making process depend greatly on informative content (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Research reveals that, before making a purchase choice, customers use text-based content to search for trustworthy information from online sources and organization websites. High-quality information also enhances perceived usefulness and trust, both of which have a positive influence on consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions (Rose et al., 2012; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2018). Organizations aiming to help customers' information search and boost purchase intent must therefore offer insightful material.

2.2.4 Visual Information - Visually oriented content-such as pictures, videos, and infographics are utilized in online settings to interact with consumers and inform them about items is referred as visual information. According to Appel et al. (2019) and Dwivedi et al. (2023), visual material can improve people's understanding of difficult information, hold their attention, and increase their knowledge about goods and services. Studies show that customers frequently favor visual material on digital platforms over written text because it is easier to understand and more engaging (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rose et al., 2012). Because people frequently look for video and picture material on specialized websites like social media platforms or video streaming services, visual media is equally crucial to online marketing campaigns. Visual content may improve customer engagement and positively influence purchase intentions (Appel et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

2.3 Content Marketing and Purchase Intention

In the digital era, content marketing is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor that influences consumers' purchase intentions (Subarkah et al., 2025). Recent studies indicate that comprehensive content marketing initiatives positively affect customer behavior, including brand trust and purchase intention. Brand trust is particularly mediating the relationship between content and intention (Subarkah et al., 2025; Djafarova and Davies, 2025; Chen et al., 2024). Previous research also demonstrates that visual electronic word of mouth (eWOM) quality and trustworthiness have a major influence on information usefulness and acceptance, which in turn affects purchase intent (Bui, 2025). In the context of digital material, short-form video content qualities, including entertainment value, usefulness, and simplicity of use, have a major impact on consumer trust and purchase intent. This supports the more general effects of content marketing (Luo et al., 2025; Yang, 2023). Furthermore, although demographic moderators like gender may differ in their impact, digital content marketing tactics (text, graphics, interactive media) favorably affect consumers' online purchase intention (Gülsoy & Koçer, 2023; Saif & Nofal, 2026). These results show that many content types and channels help to influence consumer purchase intentions and that the psychological processes linking content to behaviour are still a major focus of research in the latest publications (Subarkah et al., 2025; Djafarova and Davies, 2025; Luo et al., 2025; Yang, 2023; Bui, 2025; Saif & Nofal, 2026).

2.4 The Moderating Effect of Gender

Gender is commonly studied as a moderating variable in consumer behavior because males and females usually process information differently, see things differently, and react differently to marketing stimuli. Research shows that customers' perceptions about digital information and promotional messages may be influenced by their gender, which can have an impact on purchase intention and engagement levels (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Gülsoy & Koçer, 2023). Earlier studies on content marketing have mostly concentrated on urban or general consumer demographics, paying little attention to rural India. Furthermore, gender's moderating influence on the association between purchase intention and content marketing tools is still not well analysed. This study investigates these links among Indian rural customers to close this gap.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

This research extends the conceptual model given by Aleria and Yadav (2026) and provides empirical evidence, including content marketing tools as exogenous variables affecting purchase intention. The elements Engage Sphere, Promo Sphere, Info Vault, and Visual Information are viewed as antecedents to purchase intention.

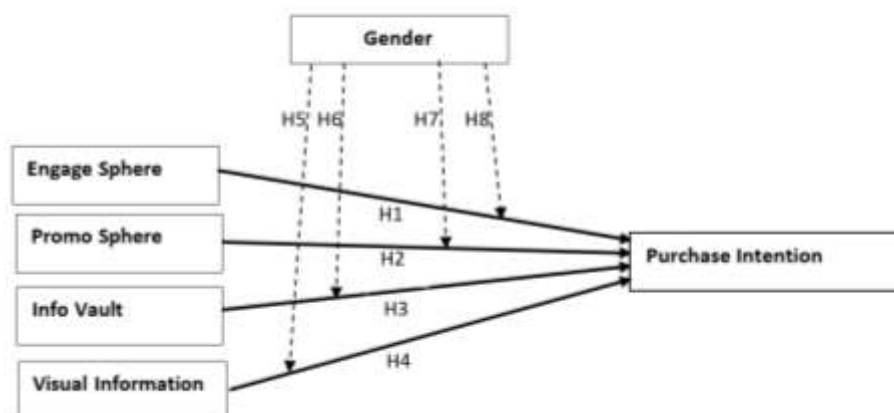


Figure 1: Conceptual model

Source: <https://doi.org/10.64171/jsrd.5.s2.236-241>

The proposed framework suggests that every type of content marketing tool plays a distinct role in shaping how consumers think and feel before they decide to buy. It is believed that the Engage Sphere affects how consumers view credibility and trustworthiness. The Promo Sphere is thought to connect with social influences and persuasive tactics. The Info Vault indicates the quality and depth of the content, which may influence logical assessments, while Visual Information triggers emotional responses and boosts memory recollection (Jain et al., 2017; Taiminen & Ranaweera, 2019).

In addition, the model also incorporates gender as a moderating variable. Research on consumer behavior shows that information processing, decision-making, and reactions to marketing messages often differ between men and women. As a result, a person's gender may influence how they view and respond to different types of promotional content. Therefore, the current study examines whether gender affects the relationship between purchase intention and the four content marketing tools.

The following hypotheses were developed to achieve the research objectives: -

H1. Engage Sphere has a significant relationship with Purchase Intention.

H2. Info Vault has a significant relationship with Purchase Intention.

H3. Promo Sphere has a significant relationship with Purchase Intention.

H4. Visual Information has a significant relationship with Purchase Intention.

H5. Gender moderates the effect of Engage Sphere on Purchase Intention.

H6. Gender moderates the effect of Info Vault on Purchase Intention.

H7. Gender moderates the effect of Promo Sphere on Purchase Intention.

H8. Gender moderates the effect of Visual Information on Purchase Intention.

Figure 1 represents a conceptual research framework. The model is evaluated using PLS-SEM because it is well-suited to handling complex models and formative constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The coefficient of determination (R^2) and path coefficients obtained from bootstrapping are used to quantify the variation in purchase intention and explain the model's efficacy.

3.2 Measurement

Demographic analysis was conducted using a nominal scale in accordance with the approach outlined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016). This scale facilitated the categorization of respondents' characteristics, including gender, age group, income, education, and other variables. The five-point Likert scale was adapted from Hair et al. (2019) and Zikmund et al. (2013), with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the behavioral responses. This scaling method allowed participants to express the degree of alignment with each statement. Some

measurement items and constructs have been drawn from the published literature, and others have been elaborated by the author.

3.3 Data collection and sampling procedures

The data for this study were gathered through the use of Google Forms to conduct an online survey. Questionnaires were distributed to consumers living in rural areas of northern India. The sampling design used to select the respondents was based on stratified sampling. Only those who have Knowledge of content marketing and content marketing tools were selected as respondents. There are five states in Northern India: Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh. Data were collected from each state equally. There were 650 questionnaires distributed, and only 500 were used and analyzed. To guarantee comparability between states, 100 questionnaires were removed for incomplete responses and 50 for failure to return the survey. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: respondents' demographic profiles and variables influencing consumer purchase intention through content marketing. The demographic profiles included: gender, age group, education, source of income, family income per month and state. Conversely, the four factors listed in the research framework were used to measure purchase intention.

3.4 Analytical method and data analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.0 and SmartPLS version 4. The use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was considered suitable since it can simultaneously evaluate the relationships among latent constructs and correct measurement errors within the structural framework (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Since this study aims to explain relationships, PLS-SEM was the best method to use, in line with the guidance from Hair et al. (2021), who pointed out that assessing measurement models should come before evaluating structural models. Particularly when theoretical support is still being developed, SmartPLS, based on SEM principles, is commonly used in social sciences for its ability to assess sophisticated cause-and-effect models. PLS-SEM is more flexible since it concentrates on variance, which makes it perfect when there are minimal assumptions regarding the distribution of the data as compared to covariance-based SEM. This flexibility makes it possible to combine formative and reflective structures into a single, coherent framework.

The research looked for common method bias before evaluating the measurement model. This required following the procedures recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and utilizing Harman's single-factor test to ensure that the variance observed was due to the constructs rather than the measuring method. The use of a principal component analysis with varimax rotation showed that the first factor describes 39.35 percent of the variance, below the acceptable 50 percent limit, hence suggesting no significant common method bias. Data analysis was carried out in two stages: initially, the measurement model was evaluated for its reliability and validity; subsequently, the structural model was examined to validate the hypotheses.

3. Discussion of results

4.1 Demographic profile

The demographic details of the participants in the study are summarized in Table 1. A balanced gender distribution was demonstrated by noticing that 50.2% of participants were female and 49.8% of participants were male. According to the data from the study, the largest age group of respondents 46.4% were between the ages of 26 and 35, while 29.4% were between the ages of 16 and 25. Younger age groups, who are frequently seen to be more technologically active and receptive to marketing initiatives, particularly through the internet, are seen to dominate these findings. This is consistent with previous research that highlights the strategic significance of this age group in studies of consumer behavior. Only 4.6% of respondents were over 45, while a smaller fraction 19.6% were between the ages of 36 and 45. A well-educated sample could be determined by the fact that the majority of respondents 43.6% were graduates, followed by postgraduates 31.4%. The percentage of people with only a 12th grade education was 16.8%, while only 5.8% of them had an M.Phil. or Ph.D. According to occupational statistics, 29.8% of the sample consisted of salaried workers, with significant representation from the agricultural sector 16.2%, self-employment 15.8% and other sectors 16.4%. To ensure regional diversity, respondents were evenly split across the five states of Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. With a generally stable economic backdrop, the majority of families had monthly incomes between ₹30,001 and ₹40,000 (22.8%), followed by ₹20,001 and ₹30,000 (22%).

[Table 1: Demographic profile]

Variables	N	Percent
Gender		
Male	249	49.8
Female	251	50.2
Age Group		
16-25	147	29.4
26-35	232	46.4
36-45	98	19.6
Above 45	23	4.6
Education		
Up to 12th	84	16.8
Graduation	218	43.6
Post-Graduation	157	31.4
M.Phil. or Ph.D.	29	5.8
Other	12	2.4
Occupation		
Agriculture	81	16.2
Business	62	12.4
Profession	31	6.2
Self Employed	79	15.8
Salaried	149	29.8
Retired	16	3.2
Other	82	16.4
State		
Haryana	100	20
Punjab	100	20
Uttrakhand	100	20
Rajasthan	100	20
Himachal Pradesh	100	20
Income per month (Family)		
Up to 20000	95	19
20001 - 30000	110	22
30001 - 40000	114	22.8
40001 - 50000	103	20.6

Source: Author's creation

4.2 Assessment of measurement model

As shown in Table 2, the results of the convergent validity examination reveal that all item loadings exceed the limit value of 0.60, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017), indicating that every indicator is strongly linked with its underlying construct. For all constructs, the item loadings range from 0.771 to 0.929, therefore strongly representing the latent variables.

Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for every construct exceed the suggested minimum of 0.50 set by Hair et al. (2009). Reflecting that their corresponding constructs account for over 50% of the variance in indicators, therefore confirming sufficient convergent validity, the AVE values range from 0.618 (Promo Sphere) to 0.825 (Engage Sphere).

The Composite Reliability (CR) values range between 0.846 (Promo Sphere) and 0.961 (Info Vault), which exceeds the commonly accepted cutoff of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2009), further confirming internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, above the 0.70 threshold, the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs indicate that the scale items are consistently measuring the underlying constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

In the following stage, the discriminant validity assessment was carried out. Fornell and Larcker (1981) state that discriminant validity is acceptable when the square root of the AVE (found along diagonal elements in Table 3) exceeds inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal elements). For all constructs, this criterion is met in the present research. Supporting the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of AVE for Engage Sphere (0.908) is larger than its correlations with other constructs, such as Purchase Intention (0.560) and Info Vault (0.649).

Although it is widely used, the Fornell-Larcker method has been slammed for its lack of ability to closely spot discriminant validity problems (Henseler et al., 2014). Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), a much more robust substitute, can fortify the results. Table 4 indicates that all HTMT values are under the conventional threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 2011) and the more liberal threshold of 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001). The highest value of HTMT noticed was 0.542 (between Promo Sphere and Purchase Intent), which falls inside the acceptable range. These results strongly support what the data show for the model's fulfillment of the demands for discriminant validity across both traditional and modern techniques.

The measurement model overall shows good psychometric properties in terms of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, therefore guaranteeing accurate and distinct measurement of the constructs.

[Table 2: Measurement model results]

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Engage Sphere(ES)	ES1	0.908	0.957	0.966	0.825
	ES2	0.911			
	ES3	0.919			
	ES4	0.897			
	ES5	0.909			
	ES6	0.903			
Info Vault(IV)	IV1	0.860	0.961	0.965	0.718
	IV10	0.825			
	IV11	0.855			
	IV2	0.857			
	IV3	0.850			
	IV4	0.858			

	IV5	0.860			
	IV6	0.867			
	IV7	0.857			
	IV8	0.838			
	IV9	0.789			
Promo Sphere(PS)	PS1	0.804	0.846	0.890	0.618
	PS2	0.811			
	PS3	0.773			
	PS4	0.774			
	PS5	0.771			
Visual Information(VI)	VI1	0.878	0.912	0.935	0.741
	VI2	0.904			
	VI3	0.872			
	VI4	0.868			
	VI5	0.777			
Purchase Intention(PI)	PI1	0.859	0.943	0.956	0.814
	PI2	0.912			
	PI3	0.906			
	PI4	0.929			
	PI5	0.904			

Source: Author's creation

Fornell-Larcker criterion

[Table 3: Fornell and Lacker criterion results for Discriminant validity]

	ES		IV	PI	PS	VI
ES	0.908					
Gender	-0.102	1.000				
IV	0.649	-0.113	0.847			
PI	0.560	-0.165	0.397	0.902		
PS	0.189	-0.140	0.174	0.497	0.786	
VI	0.081	-0.089	0.213	0.218	0.109	0.861

Source: Author's creation

[Table 4: HTMT results]

	ES	Gender	IV	PI	PS	VI
ES						
Gender	0.105					
IV	0.673	0.113				
PI	0.585	0.169	0.408			
PS	0.207	0.152	0.187	0.542		
VI	0.095	0.091	0.222	0.238	0.127	

Source: Author's creation
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

4.3 Assessment of structural model

Table 5 presents the results of the path analysis, with the R^2 value indicating that the independent constructs explain 51% of the variance in Purchase Intention (PI). This part of the structural model analysis hypothesized relationships among the constructs using standardized beta coefficients, t-statistics and p-values obtained by bootstrapping methods, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017) and Wang et al. (2023). The findings suggest the hypotheses under consideration have been fairly supported. The results indicate that Engage Sphere (ES) has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.531$, $t = 5.289$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that interactive platforms and websites significantly influence consumers' willingness to purchase. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 is supported. On the contrary, Lim and Ting (2012) noted that too much involvement without relevance could cause disinterest. In the same way, InfoVault (IV) has a strong inverse relation with purchase intention ($\beta = -0.220$, $t = 2.282$, $p = 0.023$). The link is statistically significant, suggesting that informative material has a substantial impact on consumers' purchase intention. As a result, Hypothesis H2 is supported. A decrease in customers' immediate purchase intent is associated with a higher focus on informative content, such as blogs, case studies, and e-books. Before making a purchase, shoppers are often urged by informational content to conduct more research and compare facts about the product and services. Therefore, rather of prompting customers to make a purchase right away, detailed information may make them weigh their alternatives more thoroughly and delay making a decision is suggested by negative beta values. This is in line with study by Alalwan (2018), which shows that the mere dissemination of information without any emotional appeal or customization may not have much of an impact on customer behavior.

H3 is supported. Purchase intention is positively and significantly impacted by Promo Sphere ($\beta = 0.517$, $t = 8.347$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that promotional tools such as discounts, testimonials, and competitions notably boost purchase intentions, according to earlier research highlighting the motivating influence of marketing stimuli on customer decision-making (Belch and Belch, 2015).

The findings suggest that Visual Information had a significant impact on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.110$, $t = 2.831$, $p = 0.005$), which supports H4 and emphasizes the importance of visual appeal and clarity in content marketing tools, especially for rural customers who may rely more on visual content due to literacy or language barriers. This research validates the importance of visual appeal and information clarity in content marketing, particularly for rural consumers who may rely more on visual content owing to language or literacy constraints. Well-designed visual material, including images, infographics, and videos are vital in influencing customer intent because of the significant positive relationship.

The findings of the structural model suggest that information-based tools require more refinement to address the unique demands and behavioral patterns of rural customers. Even while promotional, interaction, and visual strategies increase purchase intentions.

Table 5: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Value	Standard Error	T statistics	P values	Decision
H1	ES -> PI	0.531	0.101	5.289	0.000	Supported
H2	IV -> PI	-0.220	0.097	2.282	0.023	Supported
H3	PS -> PI	0.517	0.062	8.347	0.000	Supported
H4	VI -> PI	0.110	0.038	2.831	0.005	Supported

Source: PLS-SEM output

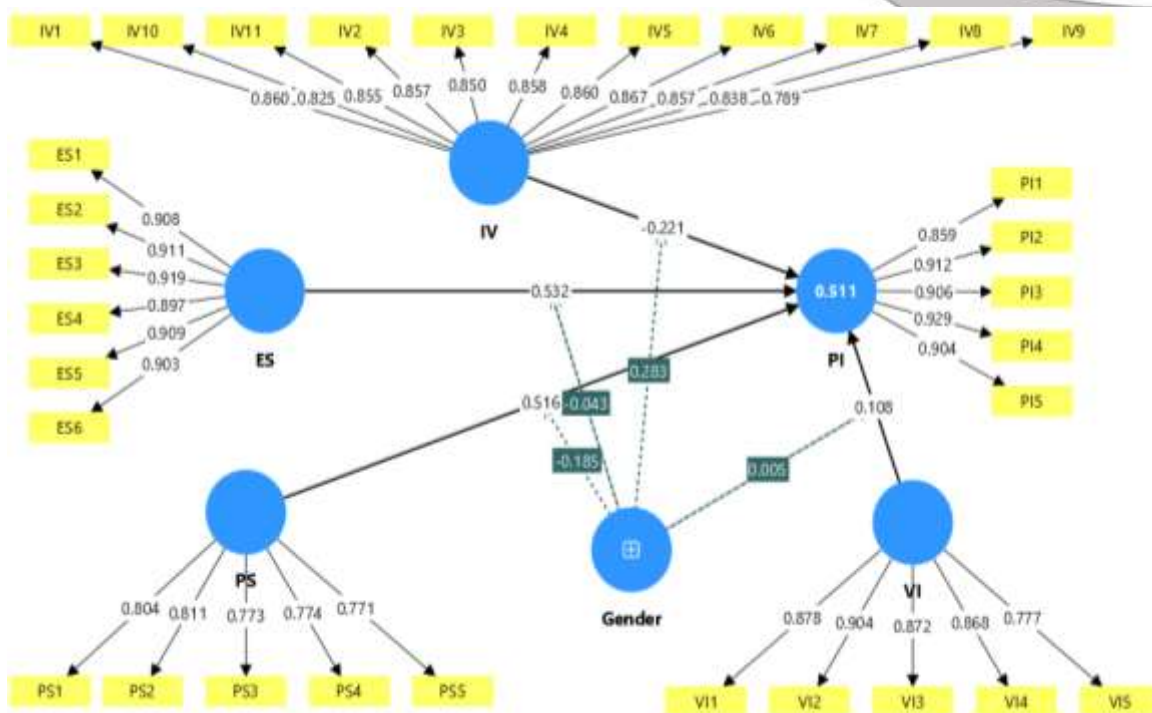


Figure 2. Verified model with loading
Source: PLS-SEM output

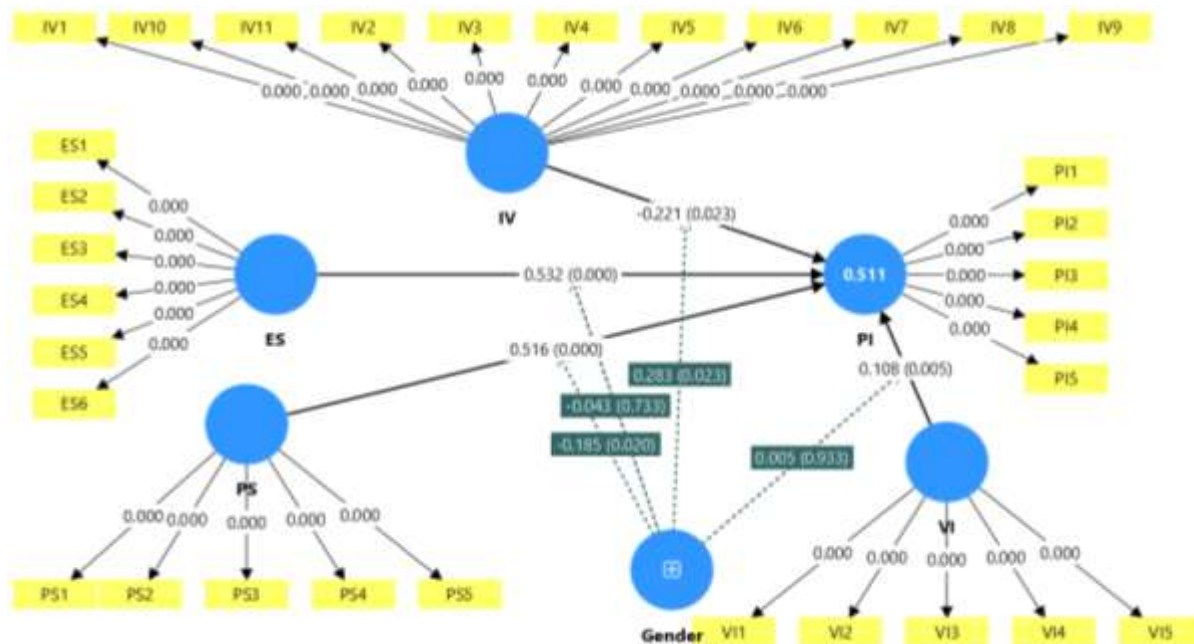


Figure 3. Verified model with P values

Source: PLS-SEM output

Table 6. Results of hypothesis testing (Moderator)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Value	Standard Error	T statistics	P values	Decision
H5	Gender x ES -> PI	-0.043	0.125	0.341	0.733	Not Supported
H6	Gender x IV -> PI	0.283	0.125	2.269	0.023	Supported
H7	Gender x PS -> PI	-0.182	0.080	2.333	0.020	Supported
H8	Gender x VI -> PI	0.005	0.059	0.084	0.933	Not Supported

Source: PLS-SEM output

4.5 Moderating Effect of Gender

The structural model looked at how gender moderated the relationship between purchase intention and content marketing tools. The findings indicate that the association between Engage Sphere and purchase intention is not substantially moderated by gender ($\beta = -0.043$, $t = 0.341$, $p = 0.733$). This suggests that there is no discernible difference between male and female customers in the impact of interactive platforms and websites on purchase intention. As a result, Hypothesis H5 is unsupported. However, the results show that the association between Info Vault and purchase intention is strongly moderated by gender ($\beta = 0.283$, $t = 2.269$, $p = 0.023$). This implies that male and female consumers are affected by informative material in various ways, suggesting that gender affects how consumers react to knowledge-based content like blogs, case studies, or articles. Thus, Hypothesis H6 is validated. Gender substantially moderates the association between Promo Sphere and purchase intention, according to Hypothesis H7 ($\beta = -0.182$, $t = 2.333$, $p = 0.020$). One gender may react more strongly to promotional tools like ads or influencer marketing, according to the negative coefficient, which shows that the impact of promotional content on purchase intention differs between male and female customers. On the other hand, the association between Visual Information and purchase intention is not substantially moderated by gender ($\beta = 0.005$, $t = 0.084$, $p = 0.933$). According to this research, both male and female customers' purchase intentions are influenced by visual information equally, such as pictures and videos. As a result, Hypothesis H8 is unsupported.

4.6 Importance-performance map analysis

The objective of IPMA is to find variables that have a significant influence but perform poorly in relation to key constructs (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016). By considering route coefficients IPMA extends PLS-SEM and provides useful value from a managerial perspective. Four content marketing tools namely Visual Information, Promo Sphere, Engage Sphere, and Info Vault as well as one moderator gender were assessed using IPMA in the current study to see how they affected customers' intentions to make purchases. With a good performance index (62.65) and the greatest significance score ($\beta = 0.532$), Engage Sphere emerged as the most significant of these, demonstrating its crucial function. Promo Sphere ranked second in terms of both performance (71.74) and significance ($\beta = 0.516$). Visual information performed fairly (61.51), but its contribution was restricted due to its tiny effect ($\beta = 0.108$). Info Vault had a negative impact despite its comparatively high performance (67.20), indicating potential overuse or intentional mismatch. Finally, gender had a detrimental impact on performance (50.20). The IPMA results show that in order to increase overall engagement and conversion strategies in content marketing, it is necessary to strengthen unappreciated but crucial marketing elements.

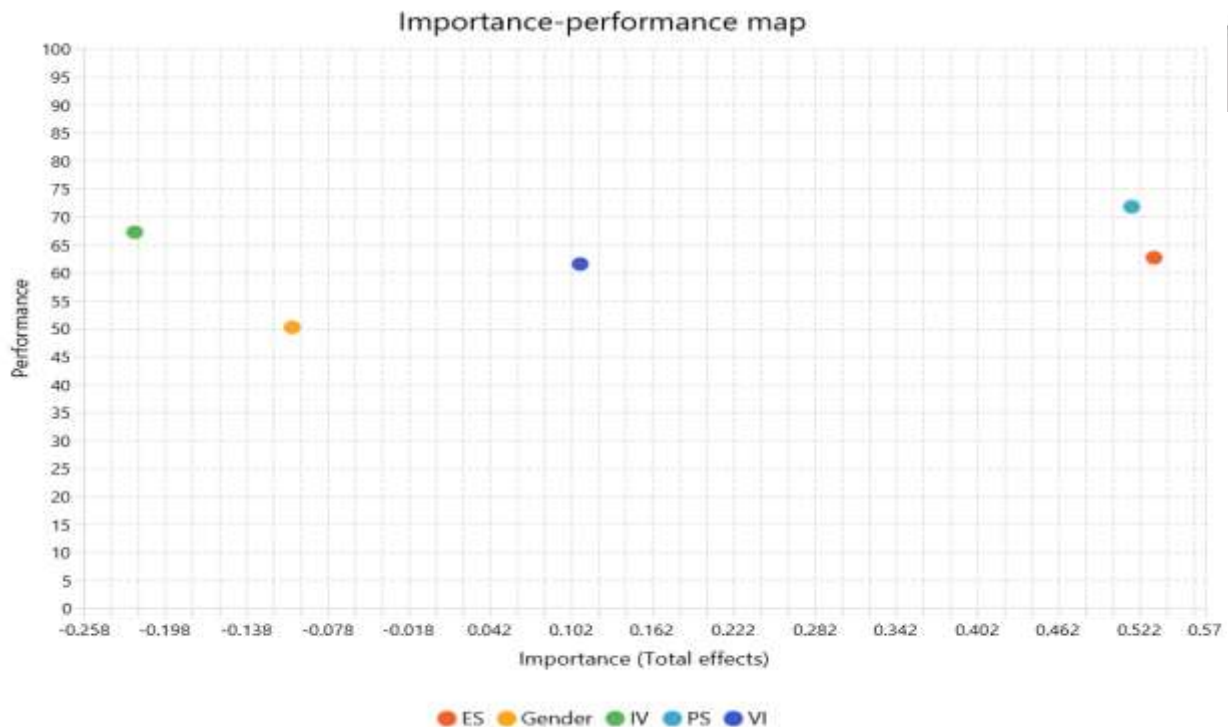


Figure 4: IPMA map analysis

Source: PLS-SEM output

Table 7: IPMA results

Construct	Importance (Total effects)	LV performance
ES	0.532	62.652
Gender	-0.104	50.200
IV	-0.221	67.202
PS	0.516	71.747
VI	0.108	61.510

Source: PLS-SEM output

5. Discussion

The findings of the study provide intriguing new information on how well different content marketing strategies influence the purchasing intention of rural Indian customers. This section relates the findings to previous research and marketing theory.

Engage Sphere had a strong, positive, and significant influence with values $\beta = 0.531$, $p = 0.000$, represented by websites and interactive digital platforms. According to these results, interactive platforms and websites have a significant impact on consumers' desire to buy products or services. Customers may examine product attributes given on the website, interact with brand content, and get comprehensive information in interactive digital environments, all of which promote engagement and influence purchasing intention. Prior research that highlights the need for interactive tools in digital marketing is consistent with these results. According to research, effective websites and digital platforms improve user experience and perceived utility, which has a beneficial effect on consumer behavior and purchase intentions (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Similarly, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) highlight the significant impact that digital touchpoints, such as websites, have on the customer journey and consumer decision-making processes. In the context of content marketing, websites also serve as central

content hubs where organizations provide valuable information and facilitate consumer interaction. Empirical evidence shows that organizational websites and search engines are primary channels through which users discover and consume digital content, highlighting their importance in shaping consumer behavior. Therefore, the significant positive relationship observed in this study confirms that engaging digital platforms are essential tool for influencing consumer purchase intention and supporting effective content marketing strategies. Hypothesis H5 is not supported, which shows the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between Engage Sphere and purchase intention not significantly moderate the relationship ($\beta = -0.043$, $t = 0.341$, $p = 0.733$). As a result it indicates that male and female consumers consume engagement content equally so don't need differentiate strategy for both.

Promo Sphere also showed a significant favorable impact ($\beta = 0.517$, $p = 0.000$), indicating the attraction of influencer-driven sponsored content. This is consistent with previous research by Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) and Campbell and Farrell (2020), which showed that influencers facilitate online trust gap bridging. Recommendations from local celebrities or well-known faces may offer social validation to increase purchase intention in rural regions where personal trust is a major element affecting consumer behavior. Hypothesis H7 shows how gender modifies the association between the Promo Sphere and purchase intention. According to the statistics, gender substantially moderates the relationship between Promo Sphere and purchase intention ($\beta = -0.182$, $t = 2.333$, $p = 0.020$). It suggests marketers should make different policies for males and females. The favorable impact of visual information on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.005$) supports hypotheses derived from studies by Lee and Hong (2016) and Logan et al. (2012), which emphasize the significance of visual engagement in content marketing. Video content and infographic forms are excellent ways to communicate in rural India, as cellphone adoption is quickly raising digital literacy (IAMAI, 2024). These content formats improve message memory and comprehension because they need less cognitive effort to process than text material (Paivio, 1990). Gender has not significantly moderated the relationship between visual information and purchase intention; according to hypothesis H8, marketers make the same policy for both males and females. The data indicate that the relationship between Promo Sphere and purchase intent is not much influenced by gender ($\beta = 0.005$, $p = 0.933$). This indicates that there isn't a significant difference between how infographics, videos, and pictures affect men's and women's purchasing decisions.

Info Vault had an unexpectedly significant but adverse influence on purchase intention ($\beta = -0.220$, $p = 0.023$). The Info Vault included magazines, newsletters, blogs, and long-form educational content. This aligns with the idea that in situations where consumers want simple, practical information, information overload might be a hindrance instead of a facilitator (Martínez-López et al., 2018). Furthermore, rural environments may see a reduction in the efficacy of dense or very technical material owing to literacy and attention span elements. However, the findings reveal that gender significantly moderates the relationship between Info Vault and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.283$, $t = 2.269$, $p = 0.023$). This suggests that informational content affects male and female consumers differently, indicating that gender influences how consumers respond to knowledge-based content such as blogs, case studies, or articles.

The findings indicate that strategies for content marketing need to align with how the audience consumes media, their cultural standards, and their level of digital experience. Using a uniform strategy for everyone could weaken the effectiveness of campaigns that are created with good intentions. Instead, marketers ought to customize their content strategies by implementing an approach that focuses on local insights and the behaviors that motivate the audience.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This research contributes significantly to the areas of digital marketing and behavioral studies. To begin with, it extends a conceptual model by incorporating various aspects of content marketing into its framework, which helps in understanding how different media influences people's intentions to act. Moreover, the results call into doubt many well-known principles in content marketing, especially the belief that all engagement platforms are equally useful for everyone. This study underlines how crucial context is when using this conceptual model, since it shows that it has negative effects on some population groups and content is consumed by males and females differently.

Moreover, this study addresses an important gap in the literature about emerging markets, particularly concerning consumers in rural areas. Prior studies have mostly focused on urban consumers or global contexts and B2B. This study offers valuable empirical data and establishes the foundation for future comparisons across various locations and economic backgrounds by concentrating on a rural setting in India.

6.2 Managerial implications

The findings give management clear strategic guidance. Marketers should emphasize Engage Sphere for rural consumers. While community engagement is crucial to digital marketing, its execution must be in line with the audience's digital skills. Brands should strive for seamless, context-sensitive interactions rather than obtrusive disruptions. Short films, animations, and infographics should be the main focus of marketing campaigns. These formats serve to make product information more understandable while also accommodating emotional and sensory needs. Second, using Promo Sphere technologies, especially localized influencer marketing, will enhance message customization and believability. De Veirman et al. (2017) claim that collaborating with neighborhood leaders or micro-influencers will significantly expand reach and trust. However, as visual information has a big impact on purchase intention, businesses need to reevaluate their visual information strategies. Develop various techniques for males and females. Lastly, companies should reconsider the Info Vault's use in environments with low literacy or attention spans. Instead of depending on long e-books and blogs, marketers might look into more accessible and easier-to-understand voice-assisted forms or brief instructional material.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of content marketing tools on rural Indian consumers' purchase intentions. The study provides proof of how different content marketing tools influence consumers' behavior. Visual Information, Promo Sphere, Engage Sphere, and Info Vault are the four essential components; among these, Engage Sphere, visual materials, and influencer promotions seemed to have the most effect on consumer purchase intentions. Purchase intention was found to be significantly influenced by visual information, especially videos and infographics. This finding underscores the increasing significance of visually appealing media forms in places where digital access is scarce. The Promo Sphere, which uses sponsored advertisements and influencer marketing, also had a significant beneficial impact. These results highlight the importance of relatability, trust, and directness in marketing to rural consumers. However, the detrimental effect of the Info Vault dimension indicates that marketers should be wary of lengthy material, such as eBooks and periodicals, and instead concentrate on user-generated content or brief videos. There is a discrepancy between long-format content strategy and rural customers' real digital activity, as indicated by Info Vault's negative statistical significance. It helps marketers adjust their content strategy to better fit rural consumers' tastes. Further characteristics like perceived trust, cultural relevance, or post-purchase pleasure may be examined in future research. Long-term studies might shed light on how the impact of content evolves as digital infrastructure and skills advance in rural India.

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Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Data Availability Statement

All the data is collected from the simulation reports of the software and tools used by the authors. Authors are working on implementing the same using real-world data with appropriate permissions.

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