

Integrating Relationship Marketing and the Theory of Planned Behavior in Digital Platform Research: A Systematic Literature Review

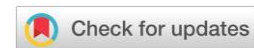
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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Relationship Marketing, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the Theory of Reasoned Action are integrated to explain behavioral intention in digital platform research. A PRISMA-based systematic literature review was conducted using Scopus as the primary database. The search on 1 December 2025 identified 565 records and after filtering and eligibility assessment, 56 empirical articles published between 2020 and 2025 were synthesized through descriptive profiling, theory mapping, variable-role mapping, and narrative-thematic analysis. The review shows that behavioral intention is not explained by isolated cognitive predictors. It emerges from layered mechanisms involving platform and technology evaluations, social-interaction cues, relational mediators, TPB/TRA cognitive variables, and post-intention outcomes such as loyalty, recommendation, usage behavior, eWOM, and engagement. This study contributes an integrative map of RM–TPB/TRA synthesis that clarifies how cognitive and relational mechanisms jointly shape digital platform behavior and future marketing research agendas in interactive commercial environments.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana *Relationship Marketing*, *Theory of Planned Behavior*, dan *Theory of Reasoned Action* diintegrasikan untuk menjelaskan *behavioral intention* dalam penelitian platform digital. *Systematic literature review* berbasis PRISMA dilakukan dengan Scopus sebagai basis data utama. Pencarian pada 1 Desember 2025 menghasilkan 565 *records* dan setelah penyaringan dan penilaian *eligibility*, 56 artikel empiris yang terbit 2020–2025 disintesis melalui *descriptive profiling*, *theory mapping*, *variable-role mapping*, serta analisis naratif-tematik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *behavioral intention* tidak hanya dijelaskan oleh prediktor

kognitif yang berdiri sendiri. Intensi terbentuk melalui mekanisme berlapis yang melibatkan evaluasi teknologi/platform, isyarat interaksi sosial, mediator relasional, variabel kognitif TPB/TRA, serta *outcomes* pasca-intensi seperti loyalitas, rekomendasi, perilaku penggunaan, eWOM, dan *engagement*. Penelitian ini menawarkan peta sintesis integratif RM–TPB/TRA yang memperjelas bagaimana mekanisme kognitif dan relasional bersama-sama membentuk perilaku pengguna platform digital, sekaligus mengarahkan agenda riset pemasaran interaktif yang lebih kontekstual dan metodologis di masa depan.

INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms have transformed how consumers evaluate offerings, interact with firms, and maintain relationships with brands, service providers, content creators, and peer communities. In contemporary platform-mediated markets, users do not merely adopt a digital service once; they compare alternatives, process social cues, respond to platform affordances, evaluate prior experiences, and decide whether to continue using, purchasing, recommending, or engaging with a platform. This makes behavioral intention a central construct in digital platform research. Yet the literature shows that intention is rarely formed through a single explanatory mechanism. It is shaped by cognitive evaluation, relational confidence, social influence, and technology-related experience.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provide a foundational cognitive explanation of intentional behavior. TRA explains intention through attitude toward behavior and subjective norm, while TPB extends this reasoning by adding perceived behavioral control as a determinant of intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These constructs remain relevant in digital contexts because platform use, online purchasing, social media engagement, service adoption, and revisit behavior usually involve deliberate evaluation. Recent studies continue to apply or extend TPB/TRA in tourism information, green product purchase, Airbnb collaborative consumption, social media influencer following, green hotels, online takeout, and heritage tourism (Berk et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2023; Hu et al., 2025; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Tanveer et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2020). However, these studies also indicate that classical intention variables are frequently enriched by trust, perceived risk, eWOM, environmental concern, perceived value, familiarity, novelty, and platform-specific experience.

Relationship Marketing (RM) offers a complementary perspective by emphasizing long-term interaction, trust, commitment, relational value, and relationship continuity in market exchanges (Berry, 1983; Grönroos, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This perspective is particularly relevant to digital platforms because users repeatedly interact with interfaces, algorithms, communities, service providers, and content ecosystems. In this context, trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, loyalty, perceived

value, and word of mouth are not peripheral variables; they explain how repeated experience becomes relational attachment. Empirical studies show this relational logic in personal services, green agri-food delivery applications, livestreaming, mHealth adoption, cultural tourism, and social networking sites (Cao et al., 2024; Karami et al., 2023; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Siagian et al., 2023; Soliman et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024).

Despite this convergence, the literature remains fragmented. Studies are distributed across tourism, social commerce, livestreaming, mobile health, AI chatbots, metaverse exhibitions, green consumption, online delivery, and digitally mediated consumer contexts. Moreover, the same constructs often perform different roles across studies. Trust may function as an antecedent, mediator, or part of a trust-risk mechanism; satisfaction may appear as a consequence of perceived value or as a predictor of loyalty and word of mouth. Technology-related variables such as usefulness, effort expectancy, information quality, digital literacy, and technology readiness also appear alongside social influence, eWOM, engagement, and community-related mechanisms (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Gumasing et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). Existing review work is still largely context-specific, such as reviews focusing on TikTok influencer consumer behavior, and does not provide a structured synthesis of how RM and TPB/TRA are jointly applied across broader digital platform research (Tian et al., 2025).

This fragmentation justifies a systematic literature review. Without a structured synthesis, it remains difficult to determine how RM and TPB/TRA are combined, which constructs most frequently operate as antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes, and how recurring empirical patterns can inform future models of digital platform behavior. For marketing scholars, such synthesis is theoretically important because it clarifies how cognitive intention formation is reinforced by relational mechanisms. For managers, it is practically relevant because platform success depends not only on usability or adoption, but also on trust, satisfaction, loyalty, advocacy, continued engagement, and the conversion of intention into post-intention behavior.

Accordingly, this study conducts a PRISMA-based systematic literature review of Scopus-indexed empirical articles on RM, TPB/TRA, and behavioral intention in digital platform and digitally mediated contexts. To guide this review, three research questions are formulated: (RQ1) How have RM and TPB/TRA-based constructs been employed to explain behavioral intention in digital platform contexts? (RQ2) Which variables most frequently emerge as antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes within this body of literature? and (RQ3) How can these recurring patterns be synthesized into a broader conceptual framework for digital platform research? By addressing these questions, this article contributes a structured RM–TPB/TRA synthesis, maps the variable roles that recur across the corpus, and develops an integrative conceptual basis for future research on interactive digital environments. The remainder of this article is organized as

follows: the next section explains the review methodology, followed by results, discussion, conclusion, references, and appendices.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design and followed the PRISMA 2020 reporting guideline to ensure transparency in identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis (Page et al., 2021). The SLR approach was selected because the purpose of this study was not to test a new empirical model using primary data, but to synthesize existing empirical evidence on how Relationship Marketing and TPB/TRA-based constructs have been used to explain behavioral intention in digital platform research. Although this review was not formally registered in an external review registry, an internal review protocol was prepared before screening. The protocol specified the database, search query, inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening stages, data-extraction categories, and synthesis strategy.

Scopus was used as the primary database due to its broad coverage of peer-reviewed literature in marketing, social sciences, communication, digital business, tourism, and consumer behavior. The search was conducted on 1 December 2025 using the Boolean query: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("relationship marketing theory" AND "behavioral intention"), yielding 565 records. Sequential filtering was applied to align the dataset with the study objectives. Limiting the publication period to 2020–2026 reduced the records to 375, restricting the subject area to Social Sciences reduced them to 106, and limiting document type to journal articles resulted in 102 records. Applying English language and Open Access filters produced 57 records for screening, meaning 508 records were removed prior to manual screening.

Eligibility criteria required studies to be published between 2020 and 2026, indexed in Scopus, categorized under Social Sciences, written in English, available in Open Access format, and empirical in nature. Additionally, studies had to examine behavioral intention or related outcomes such as continuance, usage, revisit, purchase, recommendation, or word-of-mouth intention within digital or digitally mediated contexts. Conceptually, studies needed to employ Relationship Marketing, TPB/TRA, or closely related constructs such as trust, satisfaction, loyalty, relationship quality, commitment, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, social influence, perceived value, perceived risk, and eWOM.

Non-empirical publications, including literature reviews, conceptual papers, editorials, book chapters, theses, dissertations, and conference proceedings, were excluded. Studies were also excluded if they did not focus on digitally mediated behavior or if RM/TPB/TRA constructs were only mentioned superficially. Screening was conducted in two stages: title and abstract review, followed by full-text assessment. One article was excluded at the full-text stage for being a systematic review, resulting in a

final sample of 56 empirical studies. The selection process was documented using the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram.

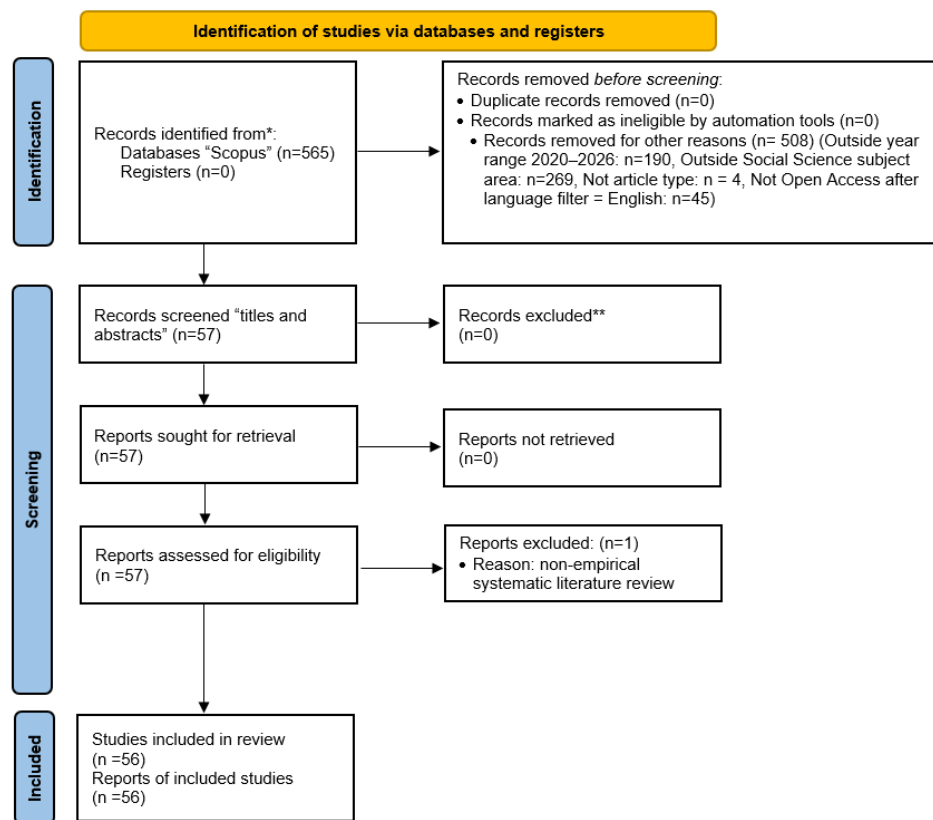
Data extraction used a structured coding matrix covering bibliographic details, theoretical frameworks, methods, analytical techniques, key variables, and findings. Variables were categorized as antecedents, mediators, moderators, or outcomes. Data management involved Scopus exports, reference management tools, and spreadsheet-based coding. As this study focused on systematic synthesis rather than bibliometric analysis, tools such as VOSviewer were not used. A qualitative appraisal assessed theoretical clarity, research design, measurement transparency, and analytical rigor. Due to heterogeneity across studies, a narrative and thematic synthesis was conducted, grouping studies by context and mapping variable roles to identify recurring patterns in behavioral intention research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Study Selection

The study selection process produced a final corpus of 56 empirical journal articles. The initial Scopus search identified 565 records using the predefined search query. Before manual screening, 508 records were removed through database-level filtering. Specifically, 190 records were excluded because they were outside the 2020–2026 publication window, 269 records were outside the Social Sciences subject area, 4 records were not classified as journal articles, and 45 records did not meet the Open Access criterion after the English-language filter had been applied. No duplicate records were identified, and no records were removed by automation tools. After database-level filtering, 57 records were retained for title-and-abstract screening. All 57 records were considered potentially relevant and were therefore sought for full-text retrieval. No reports were unavailable at the retrieval stage. The full texts of the 57 reports were then assessed against the eligibility criteria, which required the studies to be empirical journal articles addressing behavioral intention or closely related behavioral outcomes in digital or digitally mediated contexts, while incorporating Relationship Marketing, TPB/TRA, or related constructs. During the eligibility assessment, one report was excluded because it was a systematic literature review rather than an empirical study. Consequently, 56 empirical studies were included in the final synthesis. Although the search window covered 2020–2026, the final eligible corpus consisted of studies published between 2020 and 2025. The complete selection process is presented in Figure 1.



Source: Authors' adaptation of the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Page et al., 2021), based on Scopus search results retrieved.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram Of The Study Selection Process

Descriptive profile of the reviewed studies

The final corpus consists of 56 empirical journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. Although the search window covered 2020–2026, no eligible empirical article published in 2026 appeared in the final corpus. Publication output was not evenly distributed across the review period. The earlier years, particularly 2020 and 2021, contributed a smaller number of studies, while the largest concentration appeared in 2024 and 2025. Specifically, 28 of the 56 studies were published in these two years. This distribution suggests that empirical attention to behavioral intention, relational mechanisms, and platform-mediated consumer behavior has become more visible in recent literature, although the pattern should be interpreted as a corpus-specific distribution rather than as a definitive bibliometric trend.

Table 1. Bibliographic Profile Of The Final Corpus

Publication year distribution		
Publication year	Number of studies	Percentage
2020	6	10.7%
2021	5	8.9%
2022	9	16.1%
2023	8	14.3%
2024	16	28.6%
2025	12	21.4%
Total	56	100.0%
Dominant source titles		
Source title	Number of studies	Percentage
Sustainability (Switzerland)	15	26.8%
SAGE Open	6	10.7%
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications	4	7.1%
Behavioral Sciences	3	5.4%
Foods	3	5.4%
Journal of Tourism Futures	2	3.6%
Internet Research	2	3.6%
Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity	2	3.6%
GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites	2	3.6%
Other journals	17	30.4%
Total	56	100.0%
Scopus cited-by profile		
Scopus cited-by category	Number of studies	Percentage
0 citations	13	23.2%
1–10 citations	22	39.3%
11–50 citations	17	30.4%
More than 50 citations	4	7.1%
Total	56	100.0%

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Scopus database export (final corpus of 56 articles), 2026

The source-title distribution shows that the corpus is concentrated in interdisciplinary outlets that frequently publish research on sustainability, consumer behavior, tourism, digital services, and social sciences. Sustainability (Switzerland) is the most represented outlet, followed by SAGE Open and Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. This concentration should not be interpreted as evidence that the field is dominated by sustainability theory. Rather, it reflects the intersection between behavioral intention, digital or digitally mediated consumption, social influence, and relational constructs in recent open-access Scopus-indexed research. The cited-by profile also indicates variation in the maturity of the included studies. Some recent articles, particularly those published in 2025, had not yet accumulated citations at the time of export, whereas earlier and more established studies such as Zhang et al. (2020), Fauzi et al. (2024), Ong et al. (2021), and Shen and Chen (2020) had received higher citation counts.

In terms of empirical setting, the reviewed studies cover heterogeneous digital, platform-mediated, and digitally adjacent consumer contexts. To avoid overstating the homogeneity of the corpus, the studies were grouped according to their primary empirical context rather than treated as a single uniform platform category. Five broad clusters were identified: tourism, hospitality, and leisure; sustainable and food-related consumption; social media, influencer, livestreaming, and virtual communities; emerging technology and digital service adoption; and service, education, safety, and organizational relationship contexts. These clusters are analytical categories developed during coding; some studies could be cross-classified, but each article was assigned to the cluster that best reflected its primary empirical focus.

Table 2. Contextual distribution of the reviewed studies

Context cluster	Number of studies	Main empirical scope	Representative studies
Tourism, hospitality, leisure, and destination-related contexts	17	Tourism information on social media, cultural tourism, green hotels, space tourism, collaborative accommodation, industrial tourism, religious tourism, low-cost airlines, VR tourism, K-pop-related tourism, heritage tourism, and destination crisis communication	Hu et al. (2025); Soliman et al. (2025); Tanveer et al. (2025); Wang et al. (2024); Fauzi et al. (2024); Thongkruer and Wanarat (2023); Geng et al. (2022); Zhang et al. (2020); Xu et al. (2020)
Sustainable, green, food, and agri-food consumption contexts	15	Green product markets, sustainable consumption, green agri-food delivery, truffle products, sustainable product markets, Saudi coffee, online takeout, agricultural e-marketing, organic food, domestic wine, artificial meat, and value-added food products	Suttharattanagul et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Laganà et al. (2024); Islam and Khan (2024); Guo et al. (2023); Boobalan et al. (2021); Miftari et al. (2021); Shen and Chen (2020); Ogorevc et al. (2020)
Social media, influencer, livestreaming, virtual communities, and digital marketing contexts	10	Influencer marketing, restaurant livestreaming, virtual brand communities, social media advertising, social networking sites, place-brand video, online storytelling, and digital marketing in small or family businesses	Berk et al. (2024); Wang et al. (2024); Yang et al. (2024); Tirtayani et al. (2024); Siagian et al. (2023); Apasrawirote and Yawised (2022); Karampournioti et al. (2021); Strandberg et al. (2020)
Emerging technology and digital service adoption contexts	10	Metaverse digital exhibitions, AI chatbot shopping, mobile health, AI in higher education, online grocery applications, drone food delivery, QSR kiosk services, golf app adoption, digital university choice, and retail experience	Wang et al. (2025); Becan and Çeber (2025); Cao et al. (2024); Yadav et al. (2025); Gumasing et al. (2022); Jasim et al. (2022); Seo (2020); Kim and Kang (2023); Hoang and Ngo (2025)

Context cluster	Number of studies	Main empirical scope	Representative studies
Service, education, safety, and organizational relationship contexts	4	Personal service businesses, community safety behavior, employee CSR and eWOM, and related relational or organizational behavior settings	Karami et al. (2023); Khan et al. (2023); Magaš (2022); Şenbursa and Tehci (2024)
Total	56		

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Scopus data (2020–2025)

The contextual distribution shows that the corpus is not limited to one type of digital platform. Tourism and hospitality-related studies form the largest cluster, but sustainable consumption, social media, livestreaming, virtual communities, emerging technologies, and service-related contexts are also strongly represented. This heterogeneity supports the logic of a systematic review rather than a narrowly bounded single-context review. At the same time, it requires cautious interpretation. The reviewed studies do not provide a uniform model of digital platform behavior; rather, they offer recurring empirical patterns across different settings in which behavioral intention is shaped by cognitive, relational, social, and technology-related mechanisms.

Several cross-context comparisons are visible from this profile. Tourism and hospitality studies tend to integrate intention models with image, experience quality, satisfaction, trust, perceived value, and word-of-mouth outcomes, as shown in studies on tourism information, cultural tourism, green hotels, and heritage tourism (Hu et al., 2025; Soliman et al., 2025; Fauzi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020). Sustainable and food-related studies more frequently retain TPB constructs such as attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, but extend them with environmental concern, social influence, trust, eWOM, or perceived value (Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Boobalan et al., 2021; Shen & Chen, 2020). Social media and livestreaming studies place greater emphasis on relational and interactional mechanisms, including social sharing value, relationship quality, trust, loyalty, community, eWOM, and perceived interactivity (Wang et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2023; Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022; Strandberg et al., 2020). Meanwhile, emerging technology and digital service studies tend to combine platform-related evaluations, such as usefulness, ease of use, effort expectancy, technology readiness, perceived risk, and user experience, with behavioral intention outcomes (Wang et al., 2025; Becan & Çeber, 2025; Cao et al., 2024; Gumasing et al., 2022; Seo, 2020).

Overall, the descriptive profile confirms that the final corpus is empirically diverse but conceptually connected. The studies vary in context, platform type, and methodological orientation, yet they repeatedly examine how intention-related outcomes are formed through combinations of attitudinal, social, relational, and technology-related

factors. This profile provides the basis for the subsequent theory and variable-role mapping, where the review examines how RM and TPB/TRA-based constructs function as antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes across the included studies.

Theory mapping across the reviewed studies (RQ1)

The first research question examines how Relationship Marketing and TPB/TRA-based constructs have been employed to explain behavioral intention across digital platform and digitally mediated consumer contexts. Based on the primary theoretical framework recorded during coding, the reviewed studies can be grouped into five theoretical configurations: TPB/TRA-based models, technology acceptance and platform adoption models, RM-oriented and relational models, organismic or experience-based models, and integrative models without a single explicitly dominant theory. These categories are based on the primary framework used in each study; however, several studies also incorporated secondary constructs from other perspectives. Therefore, the mapping should be interpreted as a theory-use classification rather than as a mutually exclusive conceptual boundary.

Table 3. Theory-Mapping Matrix Of The Reviewed Studies

Primary theoretical configuration	Number of studies	Core constructs or theoretical emphasis	How the theory was used in the reviewed models	Representative studies
TPB/TRA-based and extended TPB/TRA models	24	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, purchase intention, revisit intention, word-of-mouth intention	TPB/TRA provided the cognitive backbone for explaining intention. Several studies retained the classical TPB structure, while others extended it with environmental concern, trust, eWOM, ethnocentrism, perceived risk, place identity, novelty, curiosity, perceived value, or service quality.	Hu et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Tanveer et al. (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Wang et al. (2024); Berk et al. (2024); Ong et al. (2024); Guo et al. (2023); Thongkruer and Wanarat (2023); Boobalan et al. (2021); Sabina del Castillo et al. (2021); Shen and Chen (2020); Zhang et al. (2020)
Technology acceptance and platform adoption models	8	Performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, perceived usefulness, ease of use, technology readiness, user experience,	These studies explained intention through technology acceptance or platform adoption mechanisms. Behavioral intention was generally positioned as a function of perceived usefulness, effort expectancy,	Wang et al. (2025); Becan and Çeber (2025); Siagian et al. (2023); Kim and Kang (2023); Zia and Alzahrani (2022); Geng et al. (2022); Gumasing et al. (2022); Seo (2020)

Primary theoretical configuration	Number of studies	Core constructs or theoretical emphasis	How the theory was used in the reviewed models	Representative studies
		trust, behavioral intention	experience, readiness, trust, or facilitating conditions.	
RM-oriented and relational/trust-based models	8	Relational benefits, trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, relationship commitment, loyalty, WOM, revisit intention, eWOM	Relational mechanisms were used to explain why users or consumers maintain, revisit, recommend, or advocate for a service, brand, platform, or destination. In these models, intention was not treated as a purely cognitive outcome, but as a consequence of accumulated relational evaluation.	Karami et al. (2023); Yang et al. (2024); Cao et al. (2024); Şenbursa and Tehci (2024); Magaš (2022); Strandberg and Ek Styvén (2020); Xu et al. (2020); Boukis (2024)
Organismic, value-based, sustainability, and experience-oriented models	6	Stimulus-organism-response, value-belief-norm, self-determination, optimal arousal, service theater, customer experience, sustainability values, perceived value	These models explained intention through internal states, value orientations, experience quality, arousal, sustainability values, or organismic responses. They often complemented behavioral intention models by showing how contextual stimuli shape psychological evaluation before intention is formed.	Suttharattanagul et al. (2025); Yadav et al. (2025); Khan et al. (2025); Nguyen-Viet and Nguyen (2023); Seo et al. (2024); Zhang et al. (2024)
Implicit or integrative behavioral models without a single explicit dominant theory	10	Perceived value, satisfaction, experience, risk, social media marketing, brand attitude, service quality, purchase intention, adoption intention, behavioral intention	These studies did not always foreground a single named theory, but they combined cognitive, relational, social, and platform-related variables to explain intention-related outcomes. Their contribution lies in empirical integration rather than formal theory extension.	Hoang and Ngo (2025); Islam and Khan (2024); Deb et al. (2024); Tirtayani et al. (2024); Nowacki et al. (2023); Jasim et al. (2022); González et al. (2022); Ong et al. (2021); Karampournioti and Wiedmann (2021); Ogorevc et al. (2020)
Total	56			

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the final corpus of 56 Scopus-indexed empirical articles.

The theory mapping shows that TPB/TRA-based reasoning is the most visible theoretical configuration in the corpus. These studies typically treat behavioral intention as an outcome of evaluative cognition, perceived social pressure, and perceived behavioral feasibility. In tourism information research, Hu et al. (2025) combined TPB with the heuristic-systematic model and found that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control contributed to travel intention. In green product and sustainable consumption contexts, Rakuša and Milfelner (2025), Shen and Chen (2020), and Boobalan et al. (2021) retained TPB constructs to explain purchase intention, while adding variables such as environmental knowledge, environmental concern, or warm glow. Other studies extended TPB into more context-specific domains, such as Airbnb collaborative consumption, online takeout, low-cost airline repurchase, agricultural e-marketing, and heritage tourism (Tanveer et al., 2025; Guo et al., 2023; Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023; Sabina del Castillo et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Across these studies, TPB/TRA served as the cognitive architecture of intention formation.

A second theoretical pattern is the use of technology acceptance and platform adoption models. These studies did not primarily rely on classical TPB constructs, but instead explained behavioral intention through performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived usefulness, ease of use, facilitating conditions, technology readiness, trust, and user experience. Wang et al. (2025), for example, extended UTAUT2 in the context of metaverse digital exhibitions and showed that effort expectancy and trust-risk mechanisms were central to behavioral intention. Becan and Çeber (2025) examined AI chatbot shopping and showed that technology readiness shaped behavioral and purchase intention through attitude toward AI and chatbot experience. Other studies applied technology acceptance reasoning to online grocery applications, agricultural e-marketing, VR tourism, QSR kiosks, golf app adoption, and social networking environments (Gumasing et al., 2022; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022; Geng et al., 2022; Seo, 2020; Kim & Kang, 2023; Siagian et al., 2023). These studies indicate that platform-related evaluation often functions as a parallel explanatory route alongside cognitive and relational variables.

The third pattern consists of RM-oriented and relational models. In these studies, behavioral intention was explained through trust, satisfaction, relational benefits, relationship quality, commitment, loyalty, WOM, or eWOM. Karami et al. (2023) provides the clearest formal RM model in the corpus because it directly examines relational benefits, satisfaction, trust, relationship commitment, and revisit intention. Other studies show similar relational logic even when they do not explicitly label the model as Relationship Marketing. Yang et al. (2024) linked social sharing value, satisfaction, trust, and relationship quality in restaurant livestreaming. Cao et al. (2024) showed that trust mediated the relationship between social influence and mHealth behavioral intention. Strandberg and Ek Styvén (2020) connected place brand love with

WOM and message-sharing intention, while Xu et al. (2020) positioned WOM and psychological distance as mediating mechanisms in destination-related behavioral intention. These studies demonstrate that relational constructs often explain the continuity and advocacy dimensions of intention, not merely the initial decision to adopt.

A fourth configuration includes organismic, value-based, sustainability, and experience-oriented models. These studies did not always use RM or TPB as the formal theoretical anchor, but they are relevant because they explain intention through psychological states, values, experience quality, or contextual stimuli. Suttharattagul et al. (2025) used self-determination logic to explain how mindful consumption and sustainability values shape purchase intention and well-being. Nguyen-Viet and Nguyen (2023) and Yadav et al. (2025) used S-O-R-based reasoning to explain behavioral intention through stimulus and organismic response mechanisms. Zhang et al. (2024) applied service theater theory to industrial tourism and showed how theatrical elements shaped customer experience and behavioral intention. Khan et al. (2025) used optimal arousal theory in space tourism intention, while Seo et al. (2024) applied value-belief-norm logic to community safety behavior. These models broaden the corpus by showing that intention can also be generated through value congruence, experiential evaluation, arousal, or organismic response.

The fifth configuration consists of implicit or integrative behavioral models that combine variables from several theoretical traditions without foregrounding one dominant theory. These studies often use perceived value, satisfaction, service quality, social media marketing, brand attitude, risk perception, customer experience, or adoption-related variables to explain intention outcomes. Although they are less explicit in theoretical labeling, they are analytically important because they reveal how empirical digital behavior research often proceeds through model integration rather than strict theory testing. For example, studies on online shops and storytelling, digital marketing in handicraft family businesses, online grocery applications, sustainable product markets, and retail experience combine user experience, brand attitude, perceived value, or satisfaction with intention-related outcomes (Karampournioti & Wiedmann, 2021; Deb et al., 2024; Jasim et al., 2022; Islam & Khan, 2024; González et al., 2022).

Overall, the answer to RQ1 is that RM and TPB/TRA-based constructs are employed in three main ways. First, TPB/TRA is used as a cognitive baseline for explaining intention through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Second, RM-related constructs such as trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, loyalty, commitment, perceived value, and WOM are used to extend or complement this cognitive baseline. Third, technology acceptance, experience, sustainability, and social-influence theories are used to contextualize the RM-TPB relationship in specific platform or consumption settings. This pattern indicates that behavioral intention in the reviewed studies is not theorized as a single-stage cognitive outcome. Rather, it is constructed

through the interaction of cognitive judgment, relational confidence, social influence, platform experience, and context-specific motivations.

Variable mapping: antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes (RQ2)

The second research question concerns the roles played by variables in the reviewed models. Rather than treating constructs only as independent or dependent variables, this review maps them into four analytical roles: antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes. This distinction is important because the same construct does not always occupy the same position across studies. Trust, for example, appears as a direct predictor of intention in some models, a mediator in others, and part of a broader trust-risk mechanism in technology adoption research. Satisfaction is also flexible: it may be modeled as an outcome of perceived value or experience quality, but it may also function as a predictor of loyalty, revisit intention, or word of mouth. Therefore, RQ2 is addressed by examining not only which variables recur across the corpus, but also how they function within empirical model structures.

Table 4. Variable-role Mapping Across The Reviewed Studies

Variable role	Main variable families	Common constructs identified in the corpus	Analytical function in the reviewed models	Representative studies
Antecedents	TPB/TRA cognitive variables	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control	These variables generally operate as immediate cognitive predictors of behavioral intention, purchase intention, revisit intention, or travel intention. They provide the basic intention-formation mechanism in TPB/TRA-based studies.	Hu et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Tanveer et al. (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Wang et al. (2024); Ong et al. (2024); Boobalan et al. (2021); Shen and Chen (2020); Zhang et al. (2020)
Antecedents	Technology and platform evaluation variables	Perceived usefulness, ease of use, effort expectancy, performance expectancy, information quality, technology readiness, facilitating conditions, perceived risk	These constructs explain how users evaluate platform functionality, usability, risk, and readiness before forming intention. They are especially visible in TAM/UTAUT, metaverse, AI chatbot, online grocery, VR tourism, kiosk, and e-marketing contexts.	Wang et al. (2025); Becan and Çeber (2025); Gumasing et al. (2022); Zia and Alzahrani (2022); Geng et al. (2022); Seo (2020); Kim and Kang (2023); Hoang and Ngo (2025)

Variable role	Main variable families	Common constructs identified in the corpus	Analytical function in the reviewed models	Representative studies
Antecedents	Social and interactional variables	Social influence, eWOM, WOM, community, social sharing value, online interaction, perceived interactivity	These variables capture the social embeddedness of digital or digitally mediated behavior. They often influence intention directly or indirectly through trust, satisfaction, attitude, or relational evaluation.	Mouloudj et al. (2025); Cao et al. (2024); Yang et al. (2024); Soliman et al. (2025); Siagian et al. (2023); Apasrawirote and Yawised (2022); Strandberg and Ek Styvén (2020); Xu et al. (2020)
Antecedents	Value, sustainability, and contextual evaluation variables	Perceived value, hedonic value, utilitarian value, sustainability values, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, economic benefits, perceived quality, country image, destination image	These constructs operate as upstream evaluations that shape attitude, satisfaction, trust, or intention. They are prominent in tourism, sustainable consumption, food, hospitality, and destination-related studies.	Suttharattanagul et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Soliman et al. (2025); Fauzi et al. (2024); Islam and Khan (2024); Guo et al. (2023); Boobalan et al. (2021); Shen and Chen (2020)
Mediators	Relational mediators	Trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, relationship commitment, loyalty, perceived relational benefits	Relational mediators explain how platform experience, social influence, service quality, or perceived value is translated into intention, revisit, WOM, or loyalty-related outcomes. These constructs are central to the RM contribution within the reviewed models.	Karami et al. (2023); Yang et al. (2024); Cao et al. (2024); Soliman et al. (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Siagian et al. (2023); Magaš (2022); Xu et al. (2020)
Mediators	Cognitive and affective mediators	Attitude, affective image, cognitive image, desire, health consciousness, chatbot experience, user experience, perceived	These mediators explain the internal processing route between external stimuli or platform attributes and intention. They show that intention is often formed	Hu et al. (2025); Becan and Çeber (2025); Cao et al. (2024); Geng et al. (2022); Zhang et al. (2024); Nguyen-Viet and Nguyen (2023);

Variable role	Main variable families	Common constructs identified in the corpus	Analytical function in the reviewed models	Representative studies
		usefulness, perceived ease of use	through staged evaluation rather than through a direct stimulus-response relationship.	Gumasing et al. (2022)
Moderators	Individual and demographic boundary conditions	Gender, age, educational level, customer segmentation, personal innovativeness, user experience, past experience, habit	These variables condition the strength or direction of relationships in intention models. Their presence indicates that the effects of cognitive, relational, or platform-related variables are not always stable across user groups.	Mouloudj et al. (2025); Tanveer et al. (2025); Guo et al. (2023); Karami et al. (2023); Zia and Alzahrani (2022); Geng et al. (2022); Hoang and Ngo (2025)
Moderators	Cultural, contextual, and risk-related boundary conditions	Cultural values, long-term orientation, perceived barriers, environmental concern, perceived risk, platform familiarity	These moderators show how broader contextual conditions alter intention pathways, particularly in sustainability, green consumption, collaborative consumption, and technology adoption settings.	Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Guo et al. (2023); Tanveer et al. (2025); Zia and Alzahrani (2022); Gumasing et al. (2022); Wang et al. (2025)
Outcomes	Intention-related outcomes	Behavioral intention, purchase intention, usage intention, continuance intention, travel intention, revisit intention, recommendation intention, word-of-mouth intention	Intention remains the dominant outcome across the corpus. However, the type of intention varies by context, ranging from platform use and purchase to travel, revisit, recommendation, and continued engagement.	Hu et al. (2025); Wang et al. (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Soliman et al. (2025); Becan and Çeber (2025); Ong et al. (2024); Jasim et al. (2022); Zia and Alzahrani (2022)
Outcomes	Post-intention relational and behavioral outcomes	WOM, eWOM, loyalty, customer loyalty, actual usage, actual visitation, willingness to pay, continued engagement	Several studies extend beyond intention to relational or behavioral consequences. This is where RM becomes especially important because	Yang et al. (2024); Soliman et al. (2025); Boukis (2024); Siagian et al. (2023); Nguyen-Viet and Nguyen (2023); Ong et al. (2024); Xu et al.

Variable role	Main variable families	Common constructs identified in the corpus	Analytical function in the reviewed models	Representative studies
			trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, and loyalty help explain how intention develops into advocacy, continuance, and behavioral commitment.	(2020); Strandberg and Ek Styvén (2020)

Source: Authors' synthesis based on the final corpus of 56 Scopus-indexed empirical articles.

The mapping shows that antecedent variables in the reviewed studies are not confined to the TPB/TRA triad. Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control remain central in TPB/TRA-based studies, but they are frequently extended by platform evaluation, social influence, perceived value, environmental concern, perceived risk, and relational variables. For instance, Hu et al. (2025) linked tourism information quality to country image and attitude before explaining travel intention, while Mouloudj et al. (2025) extended TPB with trust and electronic word of mouth in green agri-food delivery app adoption. Similarly, Wang et al. (2025) positioned effort expectancy, trust-risk dynamics, social influence, and eWOM as key explanatory elements in metaverse digital exhibition acceptance. These studies indicate that digital intention models generally begin with multiple upstream conditions rather than a single cognitive predictor.

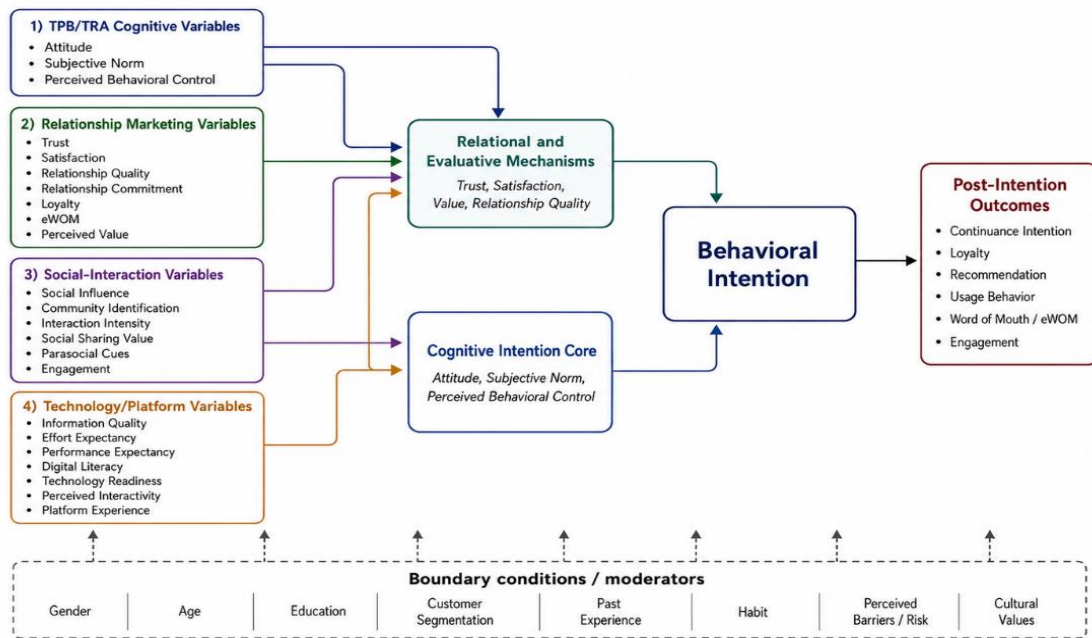
At the mediating level, the reviewed literature shows two dominant routes. The first is a relational route, where trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, or commitment translate prior evaluations into intention and post-intention outcomes. Karami et al. (2023) showed that relational benefits influenced satisfaction, trust, relationship commitment, and revisit intention, while Yang et al. (2024) demonstrated that social sharing value operated through trust and satisfaction before influencing behavioral intention and WOM in restaurant livestreaming. Cao et al. (2024) similarly found that social influence affected mHealth behavioral intention through trust and health consciousness. The second route is cognitive-affective mediation, where attitude, image, user experience, chatbot experience, perceived usefulness, ease of use, or desire mediate the link between platform stimuli and intention. This route appears in tourism information, AI chatbot interaction, VR tourism, industrial tourism, and digital service adoption studies (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Geng et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024).

Moderating variables appear less consistently than mediators but remain theoretically important because they identify the boundary conditions of intention

models. Gender moderated part of the trust-intention relationship in green agri-food delivery app adoption, while past experience altered the attitude-intention relationship in Airbnb collaborative consumption (Mouloudj et al., 2025; Tanveer et al., 2025). Educational level, age, habit, customer segmentation, personal innovativeness, and cultural values were also used to explain why similar predictors do not always produce equivalent effects across user groups or contexts (Geng et al., 2022; Guo et al., 2023; Karami et al., 2023; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). This pattern suggests that the literature has begun to recognize heterogeneity in digital consumer behavior, although boundary conditions remain less systematically developed than mediation mechanisms.

At the outcome level, behavioral intention remains the most frequent dependent construct, but it is not the only endpoint. Several studies differentiate purchase intention, revisit intention, continuance intention, travel intention, usage intention, recommendation intention, and word-of-mouth intention according to the empirical context. Other studies extend the model toward post-intention outcomes such as loyalty, customer loyalty, eWOM, actual visitation, willingness to pay, actual usage, or continued engagement. This extension is theoretically meaningful for RM–TPB/TRA integration. TPB/TRA explains the immediate cognitive pathway to intention, while RM constructs help explain how intention is reinforced into relational outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, revisit, and continued use. Taken together, the answer to RQ2 is that behavioral intention in the reviewed studies is shaped by a layered variable structure. Antecedents include cognitive, technological, social, and value-based evaluations. Mediators translate these upstream conditions into intention through relational, cognitive, and affective mechanisms. Moderators specify user-level or contextual boundary conditions. Outcomes include both intention-related variables and post-intention relational or behavioral consequences. This pattern supports the interpretation that digital platform behavior is not adequately represented by direct-effect models alone; it is better understood as a mediated and context-contingent process.

Figure 2 should be read as a variable-role map rather than as a causal model to be statistically tested in its present form. Its purpose is to organize the variable positions observed across the reviewed studies. The figure shows that antecedents are typically grouped into cognitive, technological, social, and value-based conditions; mediators translate these conditions into intention; moderators explain why model effects vary across users or contexts; and outcomes extend from intention formation to relational and behavioral consequences. This visual map provides the basis for the next section, which synthesizes these variable roles into a broader RM–TPB/TRA conceptual framework.



Source: Authors' synthesis based on the final corpus of 56 Scopus-indexed empirical articles., 2026

Figure 2. Variable-role Map Across The Reviewed Studies

Cross-context synthesis and conceptual integration (RQ3)

The third research question examines how the empirical patterns identified across the reviewed studies can be synthesized into a broader conceptual structure for behavioral intention in digital platform research. The preceding theory and variable-role mappings show that the corpus is empirically heterogeneous but conceptually connected. Studies differ in their empirical settings, including tourism platforms, livestreaming commerce, sustainable consumption, mobile health, AI-based shopping, metaverse exhibitions, online services, social media, and digitally mediated consumer contexts. However, they repeatedly organise behavioral intention around four explanatory domains: platform and technology evaluations, social-interaction conditions, relational mechanisms, and cognitive intention variables.

Across the reviewed corpus, a consistent cross-context pattern concerns the role of platform and technology evaluations as upstream conditions. Across technology-mediated studies, constructs such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, effort expectancy, performance expectancy, information quality, technology readiness, and perceived risk are repeatedly positioned as early-stage evaluative inputs. In metaverse-based digital exhibitions, effort expectancy and trust-risk mechanisms were shown to influence behavioral intention through an extended UTAUT2 logic (Wang et al., 2025). In AI-driven chatbot shopping, technology readiness shaped behavioral and purchasing intention through attitude toward AI and chatbot experience (Becan & Çeber, 2025). Similar platform-evaluation logic appears in online grocery applications, VR tourism, quick-service restaurant kiosks, golf applications, and agricultural e-marketing contexts

(Geng et al., 2022; Gumasing et al., 2022; Kim & Kang, 2023; Seo, 2020; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). These studies indicate that digital behavioral intention is partly grounded in users' evaluation of platform functionality, usability, readiness, and risk.

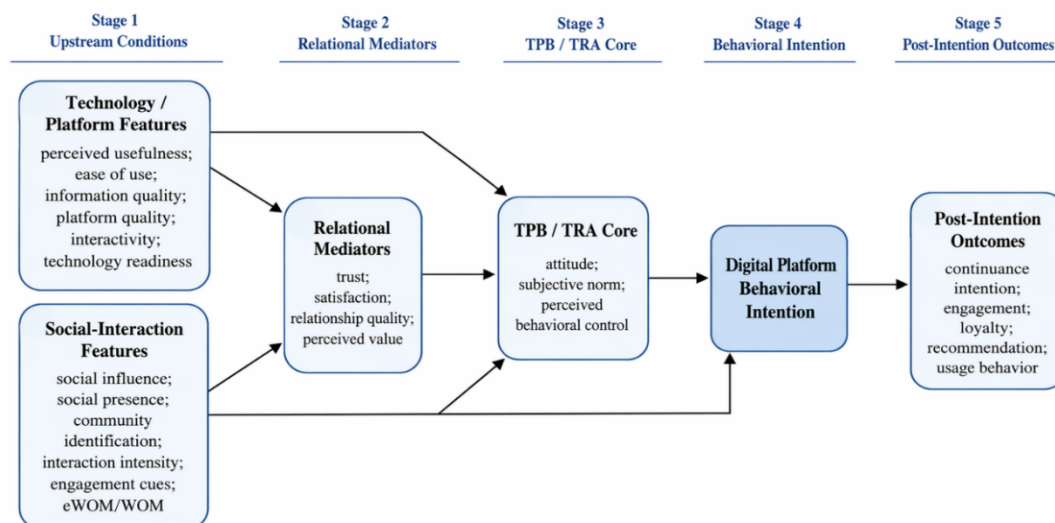
Another recurring pattern relates to social-interaction conditions. In the reviewed corpus, social influence, eWOM, WOM, community, social sharing value, engagement, and perceived interactivity often operate as social signals that shape trust, satisfaction, attitude, and intention. Mouloudj et al. (2025) showed that trust and electronic word of mouth strengthened intention to use green agri-food delivery applications. Cao et al. (2024) found that social influence affected mHealth behavioral intention directly and indirectly through trust and health consciousness. In restaurant livestreaming, social sharing value enhanced trust, satisfaction, behavioral intention, and WOM (Yang et al., 2024). In cultural tourism, social influence predicted trust, while trust, satisfaction, and attitude influenced WOM intention (Soliman et al., 2025). These findings suggest that social variables should not be treated merely as peripheral additions to cognitive models. Rather, they often provide the interactional basis through which platform users form relational evaluations.

A further recurring pattern is the mediating role of Relationship Marketing mechanisms. Trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, commitment, loyalty, perceived value, and relational benefits frequently translate platform, social, and contextual inputs into intention-related outcomes. Karami et al. (2023) directly demonstrated this relational logic by linking relational benefits to satisfaction, trust, relationship commitment, and revisit intention. Yang et al. (2024) similarly showed that trust and satisfaction mediated the effect of social sharing value on behavioral intention and WOM in restaurant livestreaming. Siagian et al. (2023) positioned perceived usefulness, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty as connected mechanisms in social networking site behavior. These studies indicate that RM constructs do not only explain post-purchase or post-use loyalty; they also function earlier in the explanatory chain by converting platform experience and social interaction into confidence, satisfaction, and relational value.

Another important pattern concerns the continued role of the TPB/TRA cognitive core. Even when studies integrate relational, technological, or contextual variables, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and related cognitive evaluations remain close to intention formation. Hu et al. (2025) showed that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control contributed to travel intention after users processed tourism information through heuristic and systematic routes. Rakuša and Milfelner (2025) confirmed the relevance of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and environmental knowledge in green product purchase intention. Tanveer et al. (2025) extended TPB with circular economy principles and past experience to explain collaborative consumption intention on Airbnb. These findings imply that

TPB/TRA remains a stable cognitive core, but the reviewed corpus also shows that this core is frequently embedded within broader relational, technological, and social conditions.

Finally, a notable pattern concerns the movement from intention to post-intention outcomes. Several studies do not stop at behavioral intention as the final endpoint. Instead, intention is linked to continuance, usage behavior, revisit, recommendation, WOM, eWOM, loyalty, actual visitation, willingness to pay, and continued engagement. For example, Yang et al. (2024) linked behavioral intention with WOM in restaurant livestreaming, while Soliman et al. (2025) positioned WOM intention as a key behavioral outcome in cultural tourism. Boukis (2024), Jasim et al. (2022), Ong et al. (2024), Siagian et al. (2023), and Zia and Alzahrani (2022) also show that intention-related models often extend toward relational or behavioral consequences. This pattern is especially important for RM-TPB/TRA integration because it clarifies how cognitive intention may become relationally reinforced into loyalty, advocacy, continued use, or usage behavior. These cross-context patterns are synthesized in Figure 3.



Source: Authors' synthesis based on the final corpus of 56 Scopus-indexed empirical articles, 2026

Figure 3. Integrative Conceptual Synthesis of RM-TPB/TRA in Digital Platform Research

The figure presents an integrative conceptual synthesis rather than a statistical model to be tested in its current form. It organizes the reviewed evidence into five visible components. First, technology/platform features and social-interaction features are positioned as upstream conditions because prior studies repeatedly show that information quality, usability, effort expectancy, technology readiness, perceived interactivity, social influence, eWOM, and social sharing value shape users' evaluations before intention is formed (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Cao et al., 2024; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). Second, relational mediators, including trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, and perceived value, explain how platform and

interaction conditions are translated into relational evaluations (Karami et al., 2023; Siagian et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024). Third, the TPB/TRA core, represented by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, functions as the immediate cognitive pathway to behavioral intention (Hu et al., 2025; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Tanveer et al., 2025). Fourth, behavioral intention is positioned as the central intention-related outcome. Fifth, post-intention outcomes capture the extension of intention toward continuance, loyalty, recommendation, usage behavior, WOM/eWOM, and engagement (Boukis, 2024; Jasim et al., 2022; Ong et al., 2024; Soliman et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Thus, Figure 3 should be read as a conceptual synthesis of recurring empirical patterns across the reviewed studies, not as a causal framework that has already been statistically validated.

The answer to RQ3 is therefore that behavioral intention in digital platform research can be conceptualized as an integrated cognitive–relational–social–technological process. Technology/platform features explain how users assess functional, usability, and risk-related aspects of digital environments. Social-interaction features explain how peer influence, eWOM, social sharing value, community, and interactional cues shape user evaluations. Relational mediators explain how trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, and perceived value translate these conditions into relational confidence. The TPB/TRA core explains the immediate cognitive pathway through which users form behavioral intention. Finally, post-intention outcomes show that intention is not merely a terminal construct but a bridge toward loyalty, advocacy, continuance, usage behavior, and sustained engagement.

Methodological quality and recurring limitations of the reviewed evidence

Beyond theoretical and variable-role mapping, the reviewed corpus also needs to be assessed in terms of methodological robustness. The qualitative appraisal focused on five aspects: theoretical clarity, research design, measurement transparency, analytical technique, and the reporting of findings. Overall, the corpus provides a reasonably strong basis for conceptual synthesis because most studies articulate clear theoretical models, specify relationships among latent constructs, and use established quantitative techniques to examine behavioral intention and related outcomes. Nevertheless, the evidence base also reveals recurring limitations that should be considered when interpreting the synthesis.

The dominant methodological pattern is quantitative, survey-based, and cross-sectional. This pattern is visible across studies on AI-driven chatbot shopping, metaverse digital exhibitions, restaurant livestreaming, mobile health adoption, green agri-food delivery applications, amusement and recreational facilities, social networking sites, and sustainable consumption (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Cao et al., 2024; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Ong et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Structural

equation modelling, including covariance-based SEM and PLS-SEM, is the most common analytical approach because the reviewed models usually involve multiple latent constructs, mediation paths, moderation effects, or integrated theoretical structures. For example, PLS-SEM is used to test complex mechanisms involving trust, eWOM, social influence, technology-related variables, and behavioral intention in contexts such as mHealth, green delivery applications, metaverse exhibitions, and restaurant livestreaming (Cao et al., 2024; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024).

This methodological profile has clear strengths. SEM and PLS-SEM are appropriate for testing theoretically specified relationships among latent constructs such as trust, satisfaction, attitude, perceived behavioral control, relationship quality, and behavioral intention. They also allow researchers to examine mediation and moderation, which is important for RM-TPB/TRA integration. Studies such as Becan and Çeber (2025), Cao et al. (2024), Mouloudj et al. (2025), and Yang et al. (2024) illustrate how these techniques can model multi-stage pathways from technology readiness, social influence, trust, satisfaction, or eWOM toward intention-related outcomes. The corpus therefore provides useful evidence for identifying recurring explanatory structures across contexts.

At the same time, the dominance of cross-sectional surveys limits causal interpretation. Most studies capture users' perceptions, attitudes, relational evaluations, and behavioral intentions at one point in time. This design is suitable for theory testing but less capable of explaining how trust, satisfaction, perceived value, or intention changes across repeated platform interactions. Becan and Çeber (2025), for example, explicitly acknowledge that changes in consumer perceptions and AI-related attitudes would be better examined through longitudinal research. Similar issues apply to studies of livestreaming, mobile health, platform adoption, and sustainable consumption, where relational mechanisms are theoretically dynamic but empirically measured at a single point in time.

Another recurring limitation concerns sample scope. Many studies use single-country samples or context-specific user groups, such as consumers in one national market, tourists in a particular destination context, users of one service category, or respondents from specific demographic segments. This does not invalidate the findings, but it restricts generalisability across cultural, technological, and platform-specific environments. For example, models tested in Turkish AI chatbot users, Algerian green delivery app consumers, Chinese metaverse exhibition users, or Thai low-cost airline passengers may not operate identically in other institutional or cultural settings (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). This limitation is especially relevant because moderators such as gender, habit, past experience, personal innovativeness, and cultural values appear in several studies but are not yet consistently theorized across the corpus.

Another limitation relates to measurement and data source. The reviewed studies mostly rely on self-reported questionnaire data. Self-report measures are appropriate for constructs such as attitude, satisfaction, trust, perceived value, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, but they may inflate associations among variables when predictors and outcomes are collected from the same respondent using the same instrument. This raises the possibility of common method bias. More importantly, self-reported behavioral intention does not always correspond to observed behavior. Although some studies extend the analysis toward actual visitation, actual usage, willingness to pay, WOM, or loyalty-related outcomes, behavioral-trace data remain less visible in the corpus (Ong et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2023; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022).

Another limitation concerns the uneven development of methodological designs. Mixed-method designs, experiments, and configurational approaches appear only occasionally. Wang et al. (2025), for instance, combined PLS-SEM and fsQCA in metaverse exhibition research, while Yadav et al. (2025) used a mixed-method approach in AI adoption in higher education. Boukis (2024) adopted a multi-study experimental design in hotel loyalty-program research, and Karampournioti and Wiedmann (2021) combined an online shop experiment with PLS-SEM and implicit measurement. These studies show that more diverse designs are possible, but they remain less common than single-wave survey models.

Table 5. Methodological Quality And Recurring Limitations Of The Reviewed Corpus

Methodological aspect	Dominant pattern in the corpus	Representative studies	Recurring limitation	Implication for future research
Research design	Quantitative, survey-based, and cross-sectional designs dominate the corpus.	Becan and Çeber (2025); Cao et al. (2024); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Ong et al. (2024); Yang et al. (2024)	Cross-sectional designs limit causal inference and cannot observe how trust, satisfaction, attitude, or intention evolve over time.	Future studies should use longitudinal designs to track changes in cognitive and relational mechanisms across repeated platform interactions.
Analytical technique	SEM and PLS-SEM are the most common techniques for testing latent-variable models, mediation, and moderation.	Cao et al. (2024); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Wang et al. (2025); Yang et al. (2024); Zia and Alzahrani (2022)	Model testing is strong, but many studies remain dependent on self-reported survey responses and single-model specifications.	Future studies should combine SEM with experiments, behavioral data, robustness checks, or configurational

Methodological aspect	Dominant pattern in the corpus	Representative studies	Recurring limitation	Implication for future research
Sample scope	Many studies rely on single-country or context-specific samples.	Becan and Çeber (2025); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Thongkruer and Wanarat (2023); Wang et al. (2025)	Generalisability may be constrained by cultural, technological, and market-specific conditions.	methods such as fsQCA. Cross-country, multi-platform, and multi-group studies are needed to test whether RM–TPB/TRA mechanisms are stable across contexts.
Measurement approach	Most studies use self-reported measures of perceptions, attitudes, relational constructs, and intention.	Hu et al. (2025); Karami et al. (2023); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Soliman et al. (2025)	Common method bias may occur when predictors and outcomes are collected from the same respondent through the same instrument.	Future studies should integrate behavioral traces, platform analytics, transaction logs, viewing records, or observed interaction data.
Outcome measurement	Behavioral intention is the dominant endpoint, although some studies include WOM, loyalty, usage, visitation, or willingness to pay.	Ong et al. (2024); Siagian et al. (2023); Soliman et al. (2025); Yang et al. (2024); Zia and Alzahrani (2022)	The intention–behavior gap remains underexamined because many studies stop at intention rather than observed behavior.	Future research should examine the transition from intention to actual usage, continued engagement, loyalty, advocacy, or repurchase behavior.
Treatment of boundary conditions	Moderators such as gender, habit, past experience, personal innovativeness, cultural values, and perceived risk appear in several studies.	Guo et al. (2023); Hoang and Ngo (2025); Karami et al. (2023); Mouloudj et al. (2025); Rakuša and Milfelner (2025); Tanveer et al. (2025)	Moderators are less consistently theorized than mediators, making boundary conditions underdeveloped.	Future studies should develop stronger moderator logic to explain when, for whom, and under which platform conditions RM–TPB/TRA pathways operate.

Methodological aspect	Dominant pattern in the corpus	Representative studies	Recurring limitation	Implication for future research
Design diversity	Mixed-method, experimental, and configurational designs appear, but remain less common.	Boukis (2024); Karampournioti and Wiedmann (2021); Wang et al. (2025); Yadav et al. (2025)	The corpus is comparatively weaker in causal testing, process tracing, and triangulation.	More experimental, quasi-experimental, mixed-method, and fsQCA-based studies are needed to strengthen causal and configurational explanation.

Source: Authors' synthesis based on the final corpus of 56 Scopus-indexed empirical articles.

Overall, the reviewed evidence is sufficiently robust to support conceptual synthesis because similar cognitive, relational, social, and technology-related mechanisms recur across diverse empirical contexts. However, the strength of the evidence lies mainly in theory-testing using latent-variable models, not in causal process explanation or observed behavioral validation. This distinction is important. The corpus supports the development of an integrative RM–TPB/TRA synthesis, but it also indicates that future research should move beyond single-wave survey designs. More longitudinal, experimental, mixed-method, and behavioral-trace studies are needed to examine how platform evaluations, social interaction, trust, satisfaction, attitude, and perceived behavioral control jointly shape behavioral intention and post-intention outcomes over time.

Discussion

The findings of this review show that behavioral intention in digital platform research is not adequately explained by a single theoretical route. Across the reviewed studies, intention-related outcomes are shaped through the interaction of cognitive, relational, social, and technology-related mechanisms. This pattern is important because it challenges a narrow interpretation of behavioral intention as merely the direct outcome of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The TPB/TRA tradition remains central, but the corpus shows that its explanatory structure is frequently extended by trust, satisfaction, perceived value, relationship quality, eWOM, platform experience, perceived usefulness, effort expectancy, and social influence. Therefore, the main theoretical contribution of this review lies in clarifying how Relationship Marketing and TPB/TRA are not competing perspectives, but complementary explanatory logics in digital platform research.

Theoretical interpretation of RM–TPB/TRA Integration

The first theoretical implication concerns the position of TPB/TRA as a cognitive core rather than a complete explanation of digital behavior. Studies using TPB/TRA continue to demonstrate the relevance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in explaining intention across diverse contexts such as tourism information, green product purchase, collaborative consumption, online takeout, agricultural e-marketing, and heritage tourism (Boobalan et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2023; Hu et al., 2025; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Shen & Chen, 2020; Tanveer et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2020). However, these studies also show that the classical cognitive structure is often insufficient unless it is embedded within context-specific extensions. For example, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, eWOM, trust, past experience, perceived risk, and destination image repeatedly appear as additional explanatory constructs. This pattern indicates that TPB/TRA remains useful, but its application in digital and digitally mediated contexts increasingly depends on theoretical enrichment.

Relationship Marketing provides that enrichment by explaining why intention becomes more durable, relational, and interaction-dependent. Trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, commitment, loyalty, perceived value, and eWOM are not merely peripheral variables. They explain how users evaluate repeated interactions with platforms, service providers, content providers, communities, and peer networks. Karami et al. (2023), for example, showed that relational benefits influence satisfaction, trust, relationship commitment, and revisit intention. In restaurant livestreaming, Yang et al. (2024) demonstrated that social sharing value affects trust, satisfaction, behavioral intention, and WOM. In mHealth adoption, Cao et al. (2024) found that social influence operates through trust and health consciousness before affecting behavioral intention. These findings suggest that RM constructs help explain how digital users move from evaluative cognition toward relational confidence and continued engagement.

The integration of RM and TPB/TRA therefore resolves a theoretical limitation that appears repeatedly across the corpus. TPB/TRA explains the immediate cognitive pathway to intention, but RM explains how repeated experience, trust formation, satisfaction, perceived value, and relationship quality strengthen or redirect that intention. In digital platform environments, users rarely make decisions as isolated individuals responding only to attitudinal beliefs or subjective norms. They interact with algorithmic interfaces, platform affordances, other users, service providers, brand communities, livestreamers, influencers, and digital content. Consequently, intention formation becomes both cognitive and relational. This review contributes by positioning RM as the relational layer that complements the cognitive architecture of TPB/TRA.

From Isolated Predictors To Layered Behavioral Mechanisms

The second implication concerns model structure. Much prior empirical work treats behavioral intention through direct-effect models in which selected predictors are linked to intention. The synthesis developed in this review suggests a more layered structure. Upstream conditions, including platform evaluations, social-interaction cues, value appraisals, and user predispositions, are translated into intention through cognitive and relational mechanisms. This layered interpretation is visible across multiple research settings. Technology-oriented studies show that perceived usefulness, effort expectancy, information quality, technology readiness, and perceived risk influence users' platform evaluation before intention is formed (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Gumasing et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). Social and interactional studies show that social influence, eWOM, social sharing value, and community-related cues often operate through trust, satisfaction, attitude, or relationship quality (Cao et al., 2024; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Soliman et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Sustainable consumption and tourism studies show that perceived value, environmental concern, sustainability values, image, and experience quality can shape intention indirectly through attitudinal or relational mechanisms (Boobalan et al., 2021; Fauzi et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2025; Shen & Chen, 2020).

This layered view is theoretically important because it reframes behavioral intention as a process rather than a terminal psychological state. In several studies, intention is not the final dependent variable but a bridge toward loyalty, recommendation, WOM, actual usage, actual visitation, willingness to pay, or continued engagement (Ong et al., 2024; Siagian et al., 2023; Soliman et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). This is particularly relevant for marketing management because the strategic objective of digital platforms is rarely limited to initial intention. Platforms seek recurring use, advocacy, engagement, loyalty, and relational attachment. Thus, an integrated RM–TPB/TRA perspective enables researchers to distinguish between intention formation and post-intention reinforcement.

The review also shows that mediators are more theoretically developed than moderators in the current corpus. Trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, attitude, image, user experience, and perceived value frequently function as mediating mechanisms. In contrast, moderators such as gender, age, habit, past experience, customer segmentation, personal innovativeness, perceived barriers, and cultural values appear less consistently and are often used as contextual add-ons rather than as theoretically central boundary conditions (Guo et al., 2023; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Tanveer et al., 2025; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). This imbalance suggests that future models should move beyond adding moderators mechanically. They should specify why particular user groups, cultures, platform types, or experience levels alter the strength of RM–TPB/TRA pathways.

Implications for Digital Platform And Relationship Marketing Research

For digital platform research, the findings indicate that platforms should be conceptualized not only as technological interfaces but also as relational and social environments. Technology acceptance variables such as usefulness, ease of use, effort expectancy, and performance expectancy explain whether users perceive a platform as functional and accessible. Yet the reviewed studies show that these variables often become more meaningful when connected to trust, satisfaction, perceived value, social influence, or user experience (Becan & Çeber, 2025; Siagian et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025; Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). This means that digital platform behavior cannot be fully captured by usability logic alone. A platform may be efficient and easy to use, but users may still disengage if they do not trust the service, perceive insufficient relational value, or fail to experience meaningful interaction.

For Relationship Marketing research, the findings extend RM beyond conventional buyer–seller or service-relationship settings. In the reviewed corpus, RM constructs operate across livestreaming, social networking, digital service adoption, tourism platforms, mHealth, online delivery applications, and digitally mediated consumption. This suggests that RM is increasingly relevant in environments where relationships are mediated by interfaces, algorithms, communities, and peer-generated content. Trust may emerge from platform reliability, social proof, service quality, or eWOM. Satisfaction may arise from content experience, platform performance, perceived value, or interaction quality. Relationship quality may be shaped not only by direct service encounters but also by community participation, livestream interaction, digital storytelling, and repeated platform use. This broader application of RM strengthens its relevance for platform-based marketing research.

The findings also have implications for future research on interactive digital environments, including Social TV, livestreaming, short-video platforms, and online communities. These contexts are characterized by real-time or delayed interaction, social presence, parasocial cues, community identification, and collective engagement. The reviewed evidence suggests that such contexts are theoretically suitable for testing RM–TPB/TRA integration because behavioral intention in these settings is likely shaped by both cognitive evaluation and relational-social experience. For example, studies on livestreaming and social commerce already show that social sharing value, trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, and WOM are central in explaining behavioral outcomes (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022; Yang et al., 2024). Future studies can build on this logic by examining whether social interaction and platform affordances strengthen behavioral intention through trust, satisfaction, social presence, perceived enjoyment, or relationship quality.

Managerial Implications

The managerial implication of this review is that digital platform managers should avoid treating behavioral intention as a response to isolated platform features. Improvements in information quality, usability, interactivity, and technical reliability remain important, but they are unlikely to be sufficient if users do not develop trust, satisfaction, perceived value, and relational attachment. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that intention-related outcomes depend on combinations of technological, cognitive, social, and relational factors. Therefore, platform strategies should integrate interface design with relationship-building mechanisms.

First, managers need to strengthen platform credibility and trust. This can be done through transparent information, reliable service delivery, consistent user experience, responsive complaint handling, secure transactions, and credible eWOM management. Trust repeatedly appears as a central mechanism in mHealth, green delivery applications, livestreaming, tourism, and social platform studies (Cao et al., 2024; Mouloudj et al., 2025; Soliman et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Second, managers should design platform experiences that generate satisfaction and perceived value. This requires not only functional quality but also relevance, convenience, enjoyment, perceived fairness, and continuity of experience. Third, managers should cultivate social and interactional cues. Community features, user-generated content, comment functions, livestream interaction, recommendation systems, and peer-sharing mechanisms can strengthen social influence and relational evaluation when they are perceived as credible and meaningful. Fourth, platform managers should differentiate strategies across user segments. The reviewed corpus shows that gender, age, past experience, habit, innovativeness, cultural values, and perceived barriers may condition user responses. This means that uniform platform strategies may not work equally across all users. New users may require usability support and risk reduction, while experienced users may respond more strongly to personalization, community recognition, loyalty benefits, or advanced interaction features. In this sense, relationship marketing in digital platforms should be understood as an adaptive process: it requires not only attracting users but also maintaining trust, satisfaction, engagement, and advocacy over time.

Limitations and Directions For Future Research

This review also identifies several limitations in the current evidence base. First, the corpus is based on Scopus-indexed, English-language, open-access journal articles within the Social Sciences category. This improves transparency and replicability but may exclude relevant studies from other databases, languages, document types, or disciplinary classifications. Second, the review relies on narrative and thematic synthesis rather than meta-analysis because the included studies vary substantially in theory, context, constructs, measurement, and outcome variables. Third, the reviewed literature

is dominated by quantitative, survey-based, cross-sectional designs. Such designs are useful for testing relationships among latent constructs, but they are less capable of establishing causality, capturing temporal change, or observing actual behavior.

Future research should respond to these limitations in several ways. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how trust, satisfaction, relationship quality, attitude, and intention evolve across repeated platform interactions. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs can clarify causal effects of platform features, social cues, interactivity, or eWOM on cognitive and relational mechanisms. Mixed-method studies can enrich survey-based findings by explaining why particular platform experiences generate trust, satisfaction, or disengagement. Behavioral-trace and platform analytics data can also help address the intention–behavior gap by comparing self-reported intention with actual usage, viewing, purchasing, revisiting, or sharing behavior. Finally, cross-country and multi-platform studies are needed to test whether RM–TPB/TRA pathways remain stable across cultural, technological, and market conditions.

Overall, this discussion indicates that the main contribution of the review is not simply the identification of frequently used variables, but the clarification of how these variables work together. Behavioral intention in digital platform research is best understood as a layered process in which technology and platform evaluations, social-interaction conditions, relational mechanisms, and TPB/TRA cognitive variables jointly shape intention and post-intention outcomes. This interpretation provides a stronger theoretical basis for future empirical studies seeking to explain continuance, loyalty, recommendation, advocacy, and sustained engagement in digital and digitally mediated marketing environments.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that behavioral intention in digital platform research is best understood as an integrated cognitive, relational, social, and technology-related process. The synthesis of 56 empirical studies shows that intention-related outcomes are rarely explained by isolated predictors. Instead, they emerge from the interaction between platform evaluations, social-interaction conditions, relational mechanisms, and cognitive intention variables. In this structure, TPB/TRA provides the cognitive core through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, while Relationship Marketing explains how trust, satisfaction, perceived value, relationship quality, loyalty, and word of mouth reinforce intention and extend it toward post-intention outcomes.

The main contribution of this review lies in clarifying how RM and TPB/TRA can be integrated in digital platform research. Rather than treating these perspectives as separate theoretical traditions, this review positions them as complementary. TPB/TRA explains the immediate cognitive formation of intention, whereas RM explains how

repeated interaction, platform experience, social influence, trust, and satisfaction strengthen relational confidence and behavioral continuity. This integration is especially relevant for digital and digitally mediated environments, where users interact not only with platforms but also with service providers, content creators, communities, peers, and algorithmic interfaces.

The review also shows that behavioral intention should not be treated as a terminal construct. Across the reviewed studies, intention is frequently connected to continuance, revisit, recommendation, loyalty, word of mouth, actual usage, willingness to pay, and sustained engagement. This finding is important for marketing management because digital platform success depends not only on attracting users but also on maintaining relationships, encouraging advocacy, and converting intention into repeated behavior. Therefore, future research should pay closer attention to the transition from intention to post-intention outcomes.

Several limitations of the current evidence base should guide future research. The reviewed literature is dominated by cross-sectional, survey-based, and self-reported designs, which limits causal inference and weakens the ability to observe behavioral change over time. Many studies also rely on single-country or context-specific samples, making cross-context generalization difficult. Future studies should therefore employ longitudinal, experimental, mixed-method, configurational, and behavioral-trace designs to test whether the RM–TPB/TRA pathways identified in this review remain stable across different platforms, cultures, and user groups.

Overall, this review provides a structured conceptual synthesis for understanding behavioral intention in digital platform research. It shows that stronger explanatory models should move beyond direct-effect relationships and examine how cognitive evaluations, relational mechanisms, social-interaction cues, and platform experiences jointly shape intention and post-intention behavior. This synthesis offers a foundation for future empirical studies on digital platforms, livestreaming, social commerce, online communities, and other interactive digital environments where continued engagement depends on both cognitive acceptance and relational value.

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