Interdisciplinary Systems for Global Management
Vol. 2 (2026), No. 3, pp. 238-269
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55578/isgm.2609.013

ARTICLE

Marketing Transformation: Strategic Integration of Traditional and Digital Approaches

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Received: 10 July 2026, Revised: 7 Sept 2026, Accepted: 14 Sept 2026, Published: 15 Sept 2026

Abstract

The growing adoption of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, social media, and data analytics is driving marketing practice towards new, more innovative ways of engaging with customers. However, traditional marketing channels can still play an important role in building brand credibility, fostering customer trust, and reaching those consumer segments less influenced by online media. This paper explores how traditional and digital marketing strategies can be combined to optimise customer engagement, brand loyalty, and organisational performance. A scoping review was undertaken to search, appraise and synthesise theory and evidence regarding transformation marketing, IMC, consumer behaviour, channel hybridity and organisational digital capabilities. Secondary data only was used. Method: PRISMA 20 20 guidance was used to search Scopus and Google Scholar on 1 October 20 25 (updated 20 January 20 26) and additional back citation and forward citation searching was undertaken to 31 May 20 26. Records were screened at duplicate, title-and-abstract and full-text stages, and inclusion was followed by appraisal of methodological quality. Results: 16 papers were included in the final evidence synthesis. The results of the literature review show that digital marketing offers better targeting, interactivity, personalisation, scalability, and performance metrics, while traditional marketing is still relevant for trust-building, mass physical reach, and specific demographic/geographic segments. Marketing transformation efforts should therefore focus on integration, rather than channel substitution, taking into account the value each channel can offer in different contexts. However, this process may be hampered by a lack of digital capabilities, resistance to change, legacy systems, siloed structures, and insufficient marketing-IT alignment. The study makes two contributions to the literature. First, it suggests a contextual hybrid-marketing framework connecting firm and market characteristics, customer segments, organisational digital maturity, channel attributes, and contingency factors to the most suitable channel configurations. Second, it provides practical implications on how organisations should embrace customer-centric channel integration, enhance cross-functional capabilities, implement data-driven performance measurement, and flexibly allocate resources across channels. The paper has implications for practice as it provides guidance on how organisations can adapt to the rapidly evolving digital environment while maintaining a balance with the trust-enhancing and human aspects of conventional marketing.

Keywords: Traditional Marketing; Digital Marketing; Hybrid Marketing; Integrated Marketing Communications; Artificial Intelligence; Consumer Engagement; Digital Transformation; Omnichannel Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, mobile applications, and social media have dramatically changed the modern marketing landscape. The new technologies have greatly increased organisations' capabilities in collecting customer data, segmenting audiences, personalising communications, monitoring campaign performance, and interacting with customers in real time. As a result, marketing is

https://doi.org/10.55578/isgm.2609.013

shifting away from mainly one-directional and mass communication via television, radio, print, billboards, and direct mail to real-time, two-directional, measurable, and personalised engagement at multiple digital touchpoints [1,2].

Notwithstanding, traditional marketing has not been completely replaced. It still offers brands visibility, credibility, and trustworthiness as well as ensures mass-market reach. It is also more relevant to older consumers, those with restricted digital access, local customers, and markets where personal selling and established media have a relatively high degree of influence. The evidence, therefore, suggests that transformation does not necessarily equate with the wholesale replacement of traditional media by digital technologies.

Customer journey complexity, another current marketing trend, further validates this point. A customer might become aware of a brand after seeing its TV commercial, seek additional information online, read social-media content, evaluate other customers' reviews, visit a physical location, and eventually buy a product or service through a mobile application or in-store. Customer journeys are therefore becoming more nonlinear and dispersed across a combination of online and offline touchpoints [2]. As such, discrepancies in communication between touchpoints can compromise the customer experience, brand identity, and the overall return on marketing investment.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is one way to coordinate and connect messages and communication channels. However, integration in the modern marketing setting goes beyond the consistency of promotional messages. It also involves connecting customer data, technologies, processes, employees, budgets, performance measures, and customer experience across offline and online channels. As a result, successful transformation not only depends on a firm's technological capabilities but also on leadership commitment, employee competencies, cultural readiness for change, cross-functional coordination, and resource allocation.

The current literature offers considerable evidence on digital-marketing adoption, IMC, customer journeys, influencer marketing, AI-enabled marketing, omnichannel management, etc. Past reviews have provided valuable insights into digital-marketing adoption, integrated marketing communications, customer journeys and omnichannel management. While informative, extant streams have typically studied digital-channel adoption, communication consistency or customer-channel behaviour independently from one another. As such, prior work has paid relatively limited attention to when traditional and digital marketing channels should be used together. Specifically, past reviews have not thoroughly combined firm characteristics, customer segment preferences, organisational digital maturity, channel capabilities and geographic/institutional conditions into one contextual framework. The current review fills this gap by providing a hybrid-marketing framework that describes how context can inform online and offline marketing channel selection and coordination. However, the available evidence remains fragmented. Digital channels are often presented as substitutes for traditional media, with little attention to the conditions under which both approaches can be used in complement. Moreover, the limited research on hybrid (integrated) marketing has failed to systematically link the selection of hybrid marketing strategies to firm type, customer segment, organisational digital maturity, and geographic and institutional context.

The current study addresses this gap by approaching marketing transformation as a context-dependent process of strategic integration. It reviews and synthesises the theoretical and empirical literature on traditional marketing, digital marketing, and hybrid marketing to discuss their respective capabilities, limitations, organisational barriers, and implementation enablers. The study then connects customer characteristics and organisational conditions to the optimal balance between online and offline marketing activities. The evidence synthesis includes 16 publications that satisfied our eligibility criteria. We also selectively drew from earlier landmark publications to frame the theoretical bases of this study and differentiated these from current empirical findings during our synthesis and interpretation of findings.

The study has three main contributions. First, it challenges the common assumption that digital transformation necessitates the abandonment of traditional marketing. Second, it integrates fragmented evidence on customer behaviour, channel integration, organisational capabilities, and marketing performance.

Third, it proposes a contextual hybrid-marketing framework linking firm characteristics, customer segments, digital maturity, channel capabilities, and market conditions to appropriate integrated strategies. This framework, grounded in evidence and designed for empirical testing, serves as a starting point for exploring how distinct hybrid-marketing setups uniquely influence customer engagement, brand outcomes, and organizational performance across varied organizational and market landscapes.

1.1. Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to:

1. analyze the changes and challenges that AI and digital technologies introduce to traditional marketing practices;
2. assess how traditional and digital marketing channels can work together to enhance customer engagement, brand loyalty, and organizational performance;
3. identify the organizational, technological, cultural, and market-related barriers that impede the integration of traditional and digital marketing;
4. examine the role of firm characteristics, customer segments, digital maturity, and market conditions in determining the appropriateness of different hybrid marketing approaches; and
5. provide evidence-based recommendations for organizations that want to coordinate traditional and digital marketing efforts.

1.2. Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How can traditional and AI-enabled digital marketing approaches be strategically integrated to create a coherent hybrid marketing strategy?
RQ2: What organisational, technological, cultural, and market-related barriers affect the integration of traditional and digital marketing, and how can organisations address them?
RQ3: How do traditional, digital, and hybrid marketing strategies differ in their effects on consumer engagement, brand perception, customer loyalty, and organisational performance?
RQ4: How do firm characteristics, customer segments, organisational digital maturity, and market conditions influence the selection of an appropriate hybrid marketing strategy?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Foundations and Continuing Relevance of Traditional Marketing

Traditional marketing refers to channels like TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, direct mail, out-of-home (OOH) advertising, personal selling, sponsorships, exhibitions, and other marketing communication channels that are traditionally non-digital. These channels have often been used by organisations to cover the market, support brand awareness, and reach out to mass audiences with their generally more stable value propositions. In the past, their use has been guided by decisions on elements of the marketing mix, most prominently product, price, place, and promotion.

With digital media, organisations' reliance on mass communication channels has weakened, but traditional marketing has not become obsolete in all contexts. Offline media can still support brand awareness, perceived legitimacy, physical presence, or interpersonal trust. Personal selling, exhibitions, sponsorships, or other relationship-driven or community-based activities, for example, can still be impactful in situations where the customer's purchase decision entails high financial, functional, or social risk. Traditional channels can also remain relevant with older consumers, less digitally connected communities, and some institutional buyers, where digital touchpoints play a less dominant role.

For this reason, the utility of traditional marketing can be situation-specific. Television and OOH advertising may provide extensive reach but limited addressability on an individual level. In contrast, personal selling can be relationally strong but relatively more expensive and less scalable. Therefore, it is incorrect to judge the performance of traditional media solely by the technical standards of digital marketing. On the contrary, it should be assessed based on target segment, stage of the customer journey, product category, geographic context, campaign objective, and the required degree of trust.

2.2. Evolution of Digital and AI-Enabled Marketing

Digital marketing encompasses search-engine optimisation (SEO), paid-search advertising, social-media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, mobile applications, influencer marketing, programmatic advertising, e-commerce, and other technology-enabled customer interactions. These channels allow organisations to target audiences, personalise communications, track customer responses, and adjust campaigns faster than most traditional methods [1].

Digital technologies have also altered the consumer's role. Customers can now review products, share their experiences, create content, compare alternatives, join online communities, and publicly question organisational claims, rather than just receiving organisational messages. As a result, digital platforms have partially transferred control over brand meaning from organisations to networked customers and stakeholders.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has further extended digital marketing capabilities. Predictive analytics, recommendation engines, automated content creation, chatbots, customer-segmentation models, and marketing-automation platforms can improve the speed and accuracy of marketing decisions. However, AI-enabled marketing also creates new risks, such as privacy, algorithmic bias, data quality, transparency, consumer autonomy, and hyper-personalisation. Technology adoption should be guided by factors such as strategic fit, data quality, ethical safeguards, and organisational readiness, not just technological availability.

Digital marketing also has important limitations. Platform dependence, ad congestion, misinformation, privacy issues, reduced organic reach, algorithmic changes, and digital advertising fatigue can diminish its effectiveness. Furthermore, customer data availability does not automatically translate into actionable customer insights. The organisation needs analytical capabilities and appropriate governance mechanisms to transform customer data into effective decisions.

2.3. Integrated Marketing Communications and Channel Coordination

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) offers a useful conceptual perspective for unifying traditional and digital marketing. IMC highlights the need for aligning messages, channels, audiences, and organisational processes in the creation of a seamless brand experience [3]. Seen from this viewpoint, traditional and digital channels should not function as separate or isolated promotional tools. They should instead complement each other and support common positioning, customer promise, and communication goal.

The current understanding of integration goes further than the consistency of messages. In practice, this term also refers to the coordination of customer data, campaign timing, channel roles, budgets, technologies, employee tasks, and performance measures. For instance, one customer may first learn about a brand from outdoor advertising, then visit its website for more information, check social-media reviews, contact an employee for personal assistance, and finally buy a product through either a physical or a digital channel. In the case of such an extended decision journey, all these touchpoints should provide consistent information to the customer. If they do not, the overall experience may be negatively affected even if individual marketing activities perform well.

IMC is therefore relevant for the present study because it accounts for the need for strategic coherence between marketing channels. However, traditional IMC research has often considered the consistency of organisational communications as its primary concern. The modern marketing context calls for a more expanded viewpoint that takes into consideration data integration, customer participation, technological infrastructure, organisational capabilities, and the alignment of online and offline experiences.

2.4. Service-Dominant Logic, Relationship Marketing and Brand Equity

Service-Dominant Logic challenges the notion that value is embedded in products and delivered by organisations. Instead, value is co-created through the application of knowledge and capabilities, and is realised through interactions between organisations, customers, and other actors [4]. This is applicable to digital marketing, as customers are increasingly engaged in brand meaning making through reviews, brand communities, user-generated content, feedback, and other types of participation.

Marketing channels should therefore be assessed according to their contribution to valuable interactions, as opposed to their reach for delivering promotional messages. Traditional encounters, such as personal selling or events, can complement digital channels in the domains of trust and interpersonal engagement, while digital media can facilitate further participation, responsiveness, and access. Hybrid marketing may therefore offer value creation potential when online and offline interactions are intentionally aligned.

Relationship Marketing Theory also shifts the focus from transactional exchanges to trust, commitment, retention, and long-term customer relationships [5]. Traditional channels can enable interpersonal familiarity and credibility, while digital systems can facilitate ongoing communication, tailored services, loyalty programmes, and timely customer support. A hybrid approach can therefore blend relational depth with digital scalability, if messages remain relevant, transparent, and consistent.

Customer-based brand equity further illustrates the importance of channel coordination. Brand equity is built through customer awareness, associations, perceived quality, and responses to the brand [6]. Inconsistent communication across traditional and digital touchpoints can dilute these brand associations. In contrast, coordinated communications across all channels can strengthen brand recognition, credibility, and a coherent brand identity. The impact of hybrid marketing should therefore be measured not only through immediate sales or digital engagement, but also through its effects on longer-term brand equity.

2.5. Market Orientation, Innovation Diffusion and Organisational Readiness

Market orientation is the degree to which an organisation is able to "generate market intelligence," "diffuse it throughout the organisation and "respond to it" [7]. Other work has used related constructs, including customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination [8]. These factors are critical in a hybrid marketing setting where channel decisions must be based on actual customer behaviour as opposed to perceived behaviour rooted in the assumption that all customers prefer either digital or more traditional forms of communication.

A market-oriented approach would involve identifying how customers are using various channels, looking for differences between segments, monitoring competitors and coordinating a response from different departments. This helps to ensure an organisation does not implement digital tools simply because they exist, or hold onto traditional channels even after there is no evidence of their continued value.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory can be used to help understand why marketing technologies are adopted at different rates in different organisations and among different customer groups [9]. The rate of adoption is influenced by the perceived relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability of an innovation. The theory can help to explain why some customers are more ready to use digital channels than others. Similarly, the theory can help to explain why different organisations have varying capabilities to successfully implement AI, automation, analytics and omnichannel systems.

The Technology Acceptance Model has also been used to explore technology adoption. In this case, perceived usefulness and ease of use determine whether or not new technology is accepted. However, acceptance of technology is not enough to ensure successful marketing transformation. The organisation also has to have the resources and capabilities to actually integrate new technologies into their strategy and operations. Dynamic Capabilities Theory is therefore relevant because it helps to explain how organisations sense market changes, seize new opportunities and reconfigure resources in order to adapt to rapidly changing environments [10].

Taken together, these theories suggest that marketing transformation is a process that is both market, technological, and organisational in nature. Customer insight is required to guide which tools are implemented, technological acceptance is required for successful implementation, and leadership commitment, learning capacity, cross-functional coordination, and the ability to reconfigure resources is required to actually integrate technology into an organisation's strategy and operations.

2.6. Omnichannel Marketing and the Nonlinear Customer Journey

It is useful to differentiate between multichannel and omnichannel marketing. A multichannel organisation may operate across several channels, but manages each independently. An omnichannel organisation, in contrast, attempts to align channels to allow the customer to move between them with ease, and to perceive the brand as a single system [11].

Customer journeys are becoming nonlinear and can include a series of organisational and external touchpoints. A customer may interact with search engines, social-media platforms, online reviews, physical stores, sales representatives, a website, a mobile app, and a customer-service channel at various stages before, during, and after purchase [2]. The organisation does not control all these interactions, especially peer-to-peer reviews, influencers, online communities, and other UGC.

The increasing complexity and nonlinearity of consumer journeys is one of the arguments for using hybrid marketing. Digital channels offer convenience, personalisation, interactivity, and behavioural data that is easy to measure. In contrast, physical and traditional channels can offer a sensory experience, reassurance, credibility, and interpersonal assistance. Integration allows each channel to play the role for which it is best suited.

However, omnichannel integration requires compatible systems, coordination of pricing and communication, clearly assigned channel roles, and shared performance measures. Without these preconditions, multiple channels may create duplication, internal competition, fragmented data, and customer confusion.

2.7. Contextual Conditions Affecting Hybrid Marketing Effectiveness

It's unlikely that a single, perfect blend of digital and traditional marketing will work for everyone. Moderating conditions include firm, customer, digital, industry, geography and institutional factors. Firm characteristics include size and resources that may affect the ability to invest in analytics, automation and specialised employees and the degree of functional and customer-data integration in management systems. Larger or global organisations may have more technical and financial resources but small and medium enterprises may have greater freedom to select and recombine channels in more flexible ways. Smaller organisations may sometimes be early adopters of digital tools since they have less legacy software and fewer management layers for decisions to pass through. Customer characteristics can also be important. Age, digital skills and access to digital technology, privacy concerns, level of involvement in the purchase and preferred formality of human contact may all affect the relative effectiveness of different channels. Customers with digital experience may prioritise speed, self-service, value and convenience, whereas other populations may prefer personal service or assurance in more tangible ways. Differences in channel effectiveness by customer group and lifecycle stage need to be empirically determined, rather than assumed on the basis of demographic categories. Organisational digital maturity will determine how much a firm is currently limited to stand-alone digital campaigns versus more coordinated, data-driven marketing. Low-digital-maturity organisations may only have some basic digital presence or simple coordination of separate channels. Digital marketing matures when customer data and analytics are integrated into the marketing system. More mature firms may coordinate channels based on integrated customer data, and deploy automation, predictive analytics, and AI-enabled personalisation, and coordinated omnichannel metrics. Industry and product type will also play a role. Services and purchases that are highly involved and require complex advice or high trust may be less well suited to digital-only channels than commodity products or frequently purchased consumer goods that are scalable with digital targeting and wide reach brand communications. Geography and institutional factors such as digital and media infrastructure, regulatory regimes for media and advertising, cultural values, platform availability and reach, privacy regulation and norms of consumer data and trust will also affect relative channel effectiveness in different settings. Existing studies have explored the impact of particular national contexts, industries and technologies but the evidence has not drawn consistently on the same dimensions of analysis to compare different regions, markets and institutional environments.

2.8. Organisational Barriers and Enablers

Organisational factors that can inhibit the convergence of traditional and digital marketing include cultural resistance, skill gaps in digital technologies, legacy systems, inconsistent customer data, siloed departments, undefined governance, and rigid budgeting processes. Marketing staff may resist technologies they do not understand. Information-technology departments may be more concerned with security and stability than with marketers' need for testing and experimentation in campaigns. Differences in business and technical language, measurement, and implementation timelines can also cause friction and slower implementation.

Executive sponsorship is a key enabler, as any transformation process requires strategic vision, investment, and people and process coordination across the organisation. Employee upskilling may also need to be an ongoing process to build skills in analytics, content and experience management, artificial intelligence, customer-experience design, privacy and compliance, and measurement.

Collaboration between the marketing, information-technology, sales, customer service, finance, and operations departments can facilitate integration of customer information and channel activities. Flexible budgeting might also allow organisations to test channel bundles and shift budgets based on performance data. Channel performance, however, should be tracked based on balanced measures that are appropriate to stated objectives rather than short-term digital KPIs alone. Metrics may include reach, engagement, conversion, customer acquisition cost, retention and lifetime value, brand equity and trust, as well as financial performance.

2.9. Research Gap and Study Contribution

Previous studies provide considerable insights about digital-marketing adoption, IMC, the customer journey, brand equity, relationship marketing, market orientation, innovation diffusion, and omnichannel management. However, these areas have not been well-connected.

First, digital marketing has been widely portrayed as an alternative to, rather than an extension of, marketing as a flexible channel system, with choices dependent on contextual factors. Second, earlier studies have not consistently articulated how firm type, customer segment, digital maturity, industry, geographic market, and institutional environment affect the choice of hybrid strategy. Third, the capabilities associated with digital transformation have often been presented with an overemphasis on technology without commensurate attention to organisational culture, leadership, legacy systems, cross-functional coordination, and resource allocation. Fourth, past studies have not consistently used common dimensions to compare hybrid marketing across markets and regions.

The current study seeks to help bridge these gaps by building upon and integrating prior research on traditional, digital, and hybrid marketing through a common theoretical lens. It leverages IMC, Service-Dominant Logic, Relationship Marketing Theory, the customer-based brand equity model, market orientation, Diffusion of Innovations, the Technology Acceptance Model, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and omnichannel marketing.

The present study conceptualizes marketing transformation as a process of strategic integration, rather than a linear migration from traditional to digital channels. Its primary contribution is the development of a contextual hybrid-marketing framework that relates:

- firm and industry characteristics;
- customer segments and channel preferences;
- organisational digital maturity;
- market and institutional environments;
- traditional and digital channel capabilities;
- organisational barriers and enablers; and
- customer, brand, and organisational outcomes.

This framework advances prior research by addressing not only why integration matters but also when alternative hybrid configurations are appropriate.

Compared with previous reviews, the present study takes a wider and more explicitly contextual lens. Kannan and Li focused on developing a framework of digital-marketing processes and research [1]. Lemon and Verhoef centred on customer experience spanning multiple touchpoints [2] and Verhoef et al. honed in on shifts from multichannel to omnichannel retailing [11]. Recent reviews have largely examined shifts towards digital marketing and digital entrepreneurship [12,13] specifically, though they did not systematically compare traditional, digital, and hybrid-marketing programmes in context. This review builds on these works by situating traditional and digital channel capabilities together with firm characteristics, customer segments, organisational digital maturity, industry conditions, and geographic and institutional contexts within one contextual framework of hybrid marketing. As such, its novelty lies not in the examination of digital transformation per se, but rather in specifying when and under which conditions combinations of traditional and digital marketing may be effective.

Table 1. Conceptual Matrix for Hybrid-Marketing Selection.

Firm and market context	Primary customer characteristics	Digital maturity	Recommended hybrid emphasis
Small or emerging firm with limited resources	Digitally active and price-sensitive customers	Low to moderate	Targeted social media, searchable digital presence and customer reviews, supported by selective local events and partnerships
Established consumer brand	Diverse mass-market segments	Moderate to high	Broad-reach traditional media integrated with social media, influencer activity, e-commerce and customer analytics
Professional or high-involvement service provider	Customers requiring trust and personal reassurance	Moderate	Thought-leadership content, digital lead generation and customer-management systems combined with consultation, events and personal selling
Retail or customer-experience-oriented organisation	Customers moving frequently between physical and digital channels	High	Omnichannel integration connecting mobile, web, social media, customer data, physical locations and after-sales service
Organisation serving older, rural or digitally constrained segments	Customers with uneven digital access or confidence	Low to moderate	Greater traditional and interpersonal communication supported by accessible digital information and assisted digital services
Digitally mature platform or technology-oriented firm	Highly connected customers expecting personalisation and speed	High	AI-enabled personalisation, automation and predictive analytics, complemented by experiential activities that strengthen trust and brand legitimacy

The matrix is conceptual and not intended to be a universally validated decision rule. It is designed to help structure the comparison of hybrid strategies and support future empirical testing with data from different organisations, industries, customer groups, and national environments.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Review Design

The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic literature review to locate, assess and synthesise the theoretical and empirical literature related to the transformation and integration of traditional and digital marketing. Articles were reviewed to categorise knowledge on the respective power of traditional vs. digital channels, organisational enablers/barriers to integrated marketing, contextual factors and/or conditions that impact hybrid-marketing system configurations, and customer/brand/organizational outcomes found in extant literature.

This review article was designed and reported using reference to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses 20 20 statement (PRISMA 20 20) to improve transparency and reporting of identification, screening, eligibility-assessment, and study-selection processes [14]. PRISMA guidelines were used as a reporting tool only, not a data analysis method.

Only published secondary literature that was available publicly was used for this review. No primary data was collected. This study does not contain any interviews, surveys, focus group data, observations, experiments or human subjects.

3.2. Information Sources

Scopus was the primary bibliographic database used in this review because it indexes peer-reviewed research in marketing, business, management, economics, and related social sciences in a curated and structured manner. Google Scholar was used as a secondary discovery database to help identify additional scholarly materials for review and to conduct forward and backward citation searches.

The Scopus search string and Google Scholar keyword search were first run on 1 October 2025. Both databases were re-run on 20 January 2026 to capture any additional publications that may have been published since the initial search. Backward and forward citation searching was completed on 31 May 2026. No new publications that met the eligibility criteria for this review were identified during the final update.

Backward citation searching was operationalized by manually searching the reference lists of publications retained after full-text screening. Forward citation searching was conducted within both Scopus and Google Scholar to identify subsequent studies that cited empirical and/or seminal works identified in this review. Because Google Scholar returns an extensive list of results that dynamically change based on undefined ranking algorithms, we screened the first 100 results returned for each predefined Google Scholar search combination ranked by relevance. Scopus was used as the core discovery source to define the corpus of reviews and Google Scholar was used as a supplementary discovery source. Full database specific search strings, filters, dates searched, and number of results returned can be found in Appendix A.

3.3. Search Strategy

This study's search strategy incorporated four concept groups: (1) traditional marketing; (2) digital and AI-enabled marketing; (3) marketing integration and transformation; and (4) customer, brand, and organisational outcomes. Terms within each of the four concept groups were connected with Boolean operators. Boolean operators were also used to bridge the four concept groups.

The full Scopus search string was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (

("traditional marketing" OR "conventional marketing" OR "traditional advertising" OR "offline marketing")

AND

("digital marketing" OR "online marketing" OR "social media marketing" OR "artificial intelligence marketing" OR "AI-enabled marketing")

AND

("integrated marketing communication*" OR "hybrid marketing" OR "omnichannel marketing" OR "marketing transformation" OR "channel integration")

AND

("customer engagement" OR "customer experience" OR "brand equity" OR "brand loyalty" OR "marketing performance" OR "organisational performance")

)

Scopus searches were conducted on journal article titles, abstracts and keywords. The core search was restricted to English-language journal articles and review articles published from 2020 to 2024 in the fields of business, management, economics, finance, and social sciences.

Abbreviated combinations of keywords representing the four concept groups were searched on Google Scholar. Google Scholar was used because, unlike Scopus, the platform does not allow field-specific Boolean searches. We reviewed the first 100 articles returned by each search string. Records that were duplicated within Scopus, within Google Scholar, or across multiple Google Scholar queries were eliminated prior to title- and abstract-screening.

Prior landmark publications were identified through independent author, title, and citation searches. Articles that were retrieved through these searches were included in the final dataset if they were needed to clarify the theoretical roots of Integrated Marketing Communications, Service-Dominant Logic, Relationship Marketing Theory, brand equity, market orientation, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and omnichannel marketing. Landmark studies were excluded from the contemporary sample of empirical evidence on hybrid-marketing effectiveness.

3.4. Eligibility Criteria

Publications were included in the evidence synthesis if they:

- researched traditional marketing, digital marketing, Integrated marketing, hybrid marketing or omnichannel marketing; were focused on the relationship between traditional and digital marketing, the transition from traditional to digital marketing (or vice versa), or the coordination between traditional and digital marketing channels;
- investigated at least one applicable customer, brand, marketing, or organisational outcome;
- reported empirical results, included a conceptual framework that was clearly described, or provided a literature review with adequate transparency to reproduce;
- were primary journal articles published in a peer-reviewed publication;
- were published in English; and
- were published between 2020 and 2024, unless they were key theoretical papers that were retained for context-setting purposes.

Publications were excluded if they:

- addressed solely a digital tool that was not pertinent to transforming marketing practice or aligning channels;
- did not investigate an applicable marketing, customer, brand, or organisational outcome;
- took the form of an editorial, opinion article, conference proceeding, undergraduate/graduate coursework, unpublished manuscript, or book or journal article that has been commercially published but not peer reviewed;
- lacked adequate methodological or conceptual detail to allow for interpretation;
- duplicated or overlapped substantially with another included publication;
- could not be accessed in full text; or
- were outside of the scope of the review in terms of discipline and/or conceptual boundaries.

Included publications from before 2020 were retained only if they provided key theoretical background. These papers were found through manual searching of references and were listed separately from the empirical evidence identified. Key theoretical publications were not used on their own to support the efficacy of a hybrid- marketing approach or configuration.

Appendix B3 lists contextual publications that were retrieved but excluded from the evidence synthesis. For example, Qalati et al. [15] was an editorial, and Rahman et al. [16] was a commercially published book; both were therefore excluded from the peer-reviewed evidence synthesis.

3.5. Study Selection and PRISMA Process

All records from Scopus and Google Scholar were imported into Zotero, where duplicates were managed and removed. Microsoft Excel was then used to record screening decisions and study characteristics. We first used Zotero's built-in duplicate-checking function and then manually searched for duplicates by reviewing each record's title, authors, publication year, and digital object identifier.

Study selection consisted of three phases: duplicates were removed; titles and abstracts were screened; and full texts were assessed for eligibility. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance against the criteria for subject, publication type, language, date, and relevance. Publications that passed title-abstract screening had their full text retrieved and were assessed against all inclusion and exclusion criteria. Figure 1 provides a flowchart of study selection. Table 3 displays counts and reasons for exclusion at full-text assessment.

In total, 495 records were identified through searches (420 from Scopus and 75 from Google Scholar). After removing 85 duplicates, we screened the title and abstracts of 410 records. We excluded 342 records because they did not meet our a priori eligibility criteria. We assessed the full text of 68 publications, of which we excluded 52. In total, we included 16 publications in our final analysis.

The most common reason for full-text exclusion was that studies did not report meaningful traditional–digital integration. Studies were also excluded because they did not report a relevant marketing outcome or provide strategic insight, were ineligible publication types, did not provide sufficient methodological or conceptual information, or were published outside the scope of the review.

Table 2. PRISMA Selection.

PRISMA stage	Number
Records identified through Scopus	420
Records identified through Google Scholar	75
Total records identified	495
Duplicate records removed	85
Unique records screened by title and abstract	410
Records excluded during title-and-abstract screening	342
Full-text publications assessed for eligibility	68
Full-text publications excluded	52
Publications included in the final synthesis	16

Table 3. Full-Text Exclusion

Full-text exclusion reason	Number
Did not meaningfully examine traditional–digital marketing integration	18
Did not report a relevant marketing outcome or strategic contribution	10
Ineligible publication type	8
Insufficient methodological or conceptual information	6
Duplicate or substantially overlapping publication	4
Full text unavailable	2

Outside the defined disciplinary or conceptual scope	4
Total	**52**

The search number list was crosschecked for accuracy: 495 records were found, 85 duplicates were excluded, 410 records were screened, 342 records were excluded based on title-and-abstract screening, 68 full-text publications were screened, 52 full-text publications were excluded, 16 publications were included for final analysis. Figure 1. PRISMA 20 20 flow diagram.

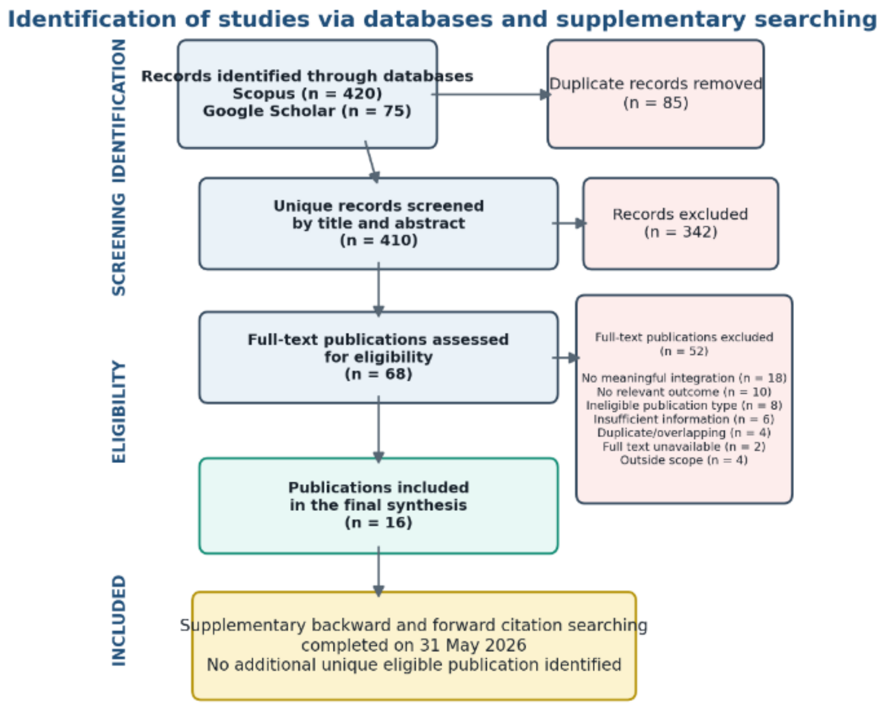

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion.

3.6. Reviewer Involvement and Inter-Rater Reliability

The Title-abstract screening was conducted by the primary reviewer, based on the eligibility criteria. The screening decisions were checked by another reviewer who also completed the screening of records where eligibility was unclear. Full-text exclusions with reasons were reviewed by both reviewers. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion with reference to the eligibility criteria.

Since two reviewers did not independently screen all records, we did not calculate an inter-rater reliability coefficient. The lack of fully independent duplicate screening was considered a limitation of this review.

3.6. Data Extraction

A standardised extraction form was used to capture similar information from each included study. It included:

- author and publication year;
- study title;
- journal and publication type;
- country or geographic region;
- industry or sector;

- firm type and organisational size;
- study objectives;
- theoretical framework;
- research design;
- sample and data source;
- customer segment;
- traditional marketing channels;
- digital marketing channels;
- organisational digital-maturity indicators;
- integration or hybrid strategy;
- organisational barriers;
- organisational enablers;
- customer, brand and organisational outcomes;
- principal findings;
- study limitations; and
- quality-appraisal rating.

The lead reviewer extracted the data onto a standardised extraction form. A second reviewer checked all data extracted for accuracy and completeness. Checked items included publication details, study design, setting, theory, channel types, integration effort, key findings, limitations and quality-appraisal scores. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus. The completed study characteristics and quality appraisal matrix can be found in Appendix B.

3.7. Synthesis Method

Due to significant heterogeneity in design, study setting, sample and respondents, theory used, and findings reported, we did not conduct a quantitative meta-analysis. We completed a descriptive narrative and thematic synthesis.

Findings were sorted by research question. Then, notes were coded into common ideas across studies relating to channel capacity, consumer engagement, brand equity outcomes, business performance outcomes, barriers to integration, organisational factors, digital capabilities, and heterogeneity of effect. Codes were reviewed and merged into six super-ordinate themes.

Conceptual articles were used to understand theoretical connections. Empirical articles were used to evaluate if and how these relationships may apply to marketers. Results were also contrasted across methodologies, industries, geographic regions, and quality scores. We placed less emphasis on conclusions that were drawn from a single publication during analysis or by studies we rated as having low methodological confidence. High or moderate confidence studies that reported consistent findings led us to make stronger conclusions. Where conclusions were drawn from low-confidence or highly context-specific findings, results were interpreted with caution.

3.8. Quality Appraisal and Risk of Bias

Quality appraisal was conducted of empirical publications using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool [17] and used for critical interpretation of review findings rather than as an exclusion criterion. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool, 2018 version [17] was used to appraise the methodological quality of empirical publications. Empirical publications were classified as qualitative, quantitative descriptive, non-randomised, randomised controlled or mixed methods. Each publication was assessed against the five design-specific MMAT criteria applicable to that category of study. Conceptual and review publications were unable to be assessed using empirical categories of the MMAT. These publications were assessed in terms of clarity of purpose, transparency of review or conceptual approach, theoretical coherence, coverage of relevant literature, consistency between evidence/conclusions, recognition of limitations, and contribution towards the review questions. Rather than calculating an overall score, criterion-level judgments were used to confer overall confidence in each publication as follows:

- High confidence: Where most applicable criteria were satisfied, and no critical weaknesses were identified
- Moderate confidence: Where publication was methodologically sound but contained limitations with interpretation, transferability, or generalisability
- Low confidence: Where publication contained significant methodological or reporting limitations which meant that could only support contextual or emerging interpretations

Confidence ratings were used to inform but not automatically exclude evidence. Findings supported by multiple high- and moderate- confidence publications were granted greater interpretive weight than those cited by a single or any low-confidence publication. Low-confidence evidence was not used in isolation to support the primary conclusions of this review. Following completion by the primary reviewer, a second reviewer checked the design classification, criterion-level judgments and overall confidence ratings. Reviews were reconciled by referring back to the publication full-text and applicable appraisal criteria until consensus was reached. Results are summarised in Appendix B for each publication.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Study Selection and Characteristics

Article search and selection yielded 16 publications for inclusion in the final evidence synthesis. Included evidence consisted of empirical, conceptual, and review publications related to digital- marketing practices, traditional–digital integration, customer journeys, brand equity, relationship marketing, market orientation, organisational transformation, and omnichannel management. Four publications presented empirical evidence related to contemporary digital-marketing practices, organisational performance or brand outcomes, or transformation conditions. The remaining evidence was primarily conceptual, theoretical, or provided review-based justification for how marketing integration may be interpreted. The empirical evidence spanned a variety of organisational, industrial, and geographic settings including small cross-border e-retailers serving European markets, Eastern India's handicraft sector, marketing firms and SMEs, and food-and-beverage service supply chains.

As a result, the overall evidence-base was stronger for theoretical explanation than empirical comparisons of traditional vs. digital vs. hybrid approaches. Heterogeneous empirical study designs and settings precluded comparison across studies, while several studies were cross-sectional, used self-reported measures, or expert judgment. Findings can therefore inform an evidence-based contextual framework, but do not prove that one hybrid-marketing model is superior in all conditions or contexts.

The PRISMA study-selection process is depicted in Figure 1. Characteristics and quality-appraisal results of included publications are detailed in Appendix B.

4.2. Targeting, Personalisation and Performance Measurement

The reviewed literature reveals a consistent finding that digital marketing has broadened organisations' capacity to target audiences, personalise communications, track customers' responses, and modify marketing efforts. Digital technologies can enable organisations to link their marketing activities with customer data across acquisition, engagement, conversion, and retention activities [1].

Digital channels also permit organisations to measure their interactions with customers using a variety of indicators such as website visits, content engagement, conversion rates, customer acquisition costs, repeat-purchase activity, and customer retention. This potentially enables managers to obtain more timely feedback than is typically available through traditional mass-media marketing channels. However, the availability of digital marketing metrics does not in itself create effective decisions. To make decisions on the basis of digital-marketing metrics, organisations must have appropriate analytical capabilities, high-quality data, clear goals, and relevant performance measures.

The empirical results of Sharabati et al. provide support for a relationship between digital-marketing activities and SME performance [18]. Their study focused on four digital-marketing activities, including digital advertising, social-media marketing, search-engine optimisation, and customer engagement. However, since their research design was cross-sectional and their sample of respondents was managers, the findings should be treated as indicative of a relationship rather than as conclusive evidence of causality.

The synthesis, therefore, suggests that the strategic edge of digital marketing is not in simply utilising digital platforms but in translating customer information into relevant and coordinated marketing decisions.

4.3. Customer Participation, Social Influence and Brand Outcomes

A second theme refers to the shift from primarily organisation-managed communication to interactive and participatory marketing. Customers may write reviews, share brand experiences, discuss in online communities and co-create brand meaning through user-generated content.

Service-Dominant Logic has supported this development, emphasising that customers are value creators rather than passive recipients of organisational offerings [4]. Digital platforms have the potential to support this through exchanges of information between customers and organisations over time. Customer participation in social media, however, can lead to both positive and negative effects because organisations cannot fully control conversations or peer-generated content.

Guha et al. provide empirical evidence of the link between social-media marketing activities and brand awareness, brand image and brand equity in the handicraft industry [19]. The findings suggest that social-media marketing can strengthen brand-related outcomes through increased exposure and interaction with customers. However, the study is context specific to one sector and geographic location, and should not be overgeneralised.

Building on the brand-equity framework of Keller [6], the effects of communication should be evaluated in terms of customer awareness, associations, perceived value, and brand responses. Digital engagement metrics, therefore, should not be considered interchangeable with long-term brand equity. Large amounts of online visibility or interaction may not translate to trust, favourable brand associations and customer loyalty.

4.4. Continuing Relevance of Traditional Marketing

The literature, then, does not support traditional marketing being abandoned wholesale. Traditional channels might still play a role in mass awareness, physical reach, word of mouth, trust building and reaching groups of customers who do not engage with digital channels exclusively.

Relationship Marketing Theory states that the key dimensions of developing long term customer relationships are trust and commitment [5]. Personal selling, consultations, exhibitions, events and other face-to-face forms of contact may help these relational outcomes; personal selling may also assist at points of high involvement or risk in the buying process.

The literature does not support the assumption, however, that all traditional marketing is suited to older or rural customers. Channel preference should be based on evidence of customers and markets, and not demographic stereotyping. Traditional marketing can therefore be retained where it has a clear strategic purpose; that purpose may be to increase physical reach, for example, or support credibility, facilitate interpersonal reassurance or reach customers who have restricted access to digital services.

The evidence therefore supports a contextual view: that traditional channels can have an ongoing role where their unique capabilities align with customer needs, market conditions and campaign goals.

4.5. Strategic Integration and Omnichannel Customer Experience

The strongest conceptual finding is that marketing transformation is best understood as channel integration rather than as the simple replacement of traditional marketing by digital marketing.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) theory emphasises the coordination of stakeholders, messages, channels and outcomes [3]. Omnichannel research builds on this by considering the pathways by which customers navigate between connected physical and digital channels. Verhoef, Kannan and Inman distinguish omnichannel management from the mere use of several independent channels [11]. Omnichannel marketing is defined by its requirement that the customer experiences the organisation as an integrated system rather than a set of disconnected communication and distribution channels.

Research by Lemon and Verhoef shows that customer journeys may include multiple organisational, partner-owned, customer-owned and external touchpoints [2]. The customer may encounter a brand in a traditional advert, search for information online, read customer-generated content, interact with employees, visit a physical location and complete a transaction through another channel. This creates a need for consistency in information, service, brand presentation and customer support.

The evidence indicates that channels can have complementary functions. Traditional channels might create initial awareness, physical presence or interpersonal trust, while digital channels might support information search, personalisation, interaction, purchase and post-purchase communication. Integration is thus characterised by each channel performing a clearly defined role within a coherent customer journey.

The synthesis does not conclude that hybrid marketing is invariably superior in all circumstances. It may not be effective if channels are used without any deliberate coordination, or if it is not aligned with customer behaviour, organisational capabilities and strategic objectives.

4.6. Organisational Barriers to Marketing Transformation

The articles reviewed in this section do not conceptualise marketing transformation as a purely technological process. There are also organisational changes and internal capabilities to reconfigure. Vitsentzatou et al. conceptualise a range of interrelated factors that support the digital transformation of the marketing mix in the food-and-beverage service supply chain [20]. Their study confirms that transformation is a complex combination of related strategic and operating conditions rather than simply introducing a set of individual digital tools.

The key barriers identified in the studies are:

- weak digital and analytical skills;
- siloed customer data;
- incompatible and/or outdated systems;
- resistance to organisational change;
- lack of marketing and information-technology collaboration;
- unclear ownership of digital transformation;
- poor data-governance structures;
- rigid budgeting;
- excessive reliance on short-term digital KPIs; and
- lack of senior leadership support.

The barriers listed above can hinder an organisation's ability to translate technology investments into desired customer or organisational outcomes. For instance, a new customer-management platform could offer limited value if customer data are fragmented across the organisation, if staff are not trained, or if there is little sharing of information between departments.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides a theoretical lens for these findings because it centres on the ability of organisations to sense changes, to seize opportunities and to reconfigure resources and processes [10]. Marketing transformation is therefore also reliant on a capability to continuously adapt, rather than seeing transformation as a single technology project.

4.7. Organisational Enablers

The synthesis also identified some factors that might act as enablers for effective integration:

- leadership commitment and strategic direction;
- investment in digital and analytical skills;

- coordination between marketing, information technology, sales, operations, and customer service;
- unified customer-data and performance systems;
- customer-driven channel selection;
- experimentation and organisational learning;
- flexibility of resources;
- ethical and transparent data practices; and
- evaluation of short- and long-term outcomes.

Market Orientation Theory also seems to lend support to these results. Kohli and Jaworski focused on the generation, dissemination, and organisational response to market intelligence [7], while Narver and Slater emphasised customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination [8]. These capabilities might help organisations select channels based on customer evidence, instead of technological enthusiasm or historical routines of the organization.

Leadership support might be needed, because integration can imply changes to organisational structures, employee roles, budgets, information systems, and performance measures. In addition, cross-functional collaboration allows marketing employees to contribute customer knowledge and insights, whereas technical teams can provide knowledge about how to successfully integrate such systems to wider information systems in terms of security, data management, and scalability.

4.8. Variation Across Firms, Industries and Markets

The evidence shows that no hybrid-marketing configuration is appropriate for all organisations. The appropriate balance of traditional and digital marketing depends on a number of factors, including:

- firm size and resources;
- industry and product characteristics;
- customer digital literacy and channel preferences;
- level of purchase involvement and perceived risk;
- organisational digital maturity;
- data and technological capabilities;
- geographic infrastructure;
- cultural expectations;
- regulatory conditions; and
- competitive intensity.

Goldman et al. offer some relevant comparative evidence by analysing strategic orientations and digital-marketing tactics in cross-border e-commerce in developed and emerging markets [21]. They show that market environment conditions the relationship between strategic orientation and digital-marketing practice, consistent with the idea that conclusions developed in one economic or institutional context should not be uncritically applied to another.

In a similar vein, Guha et al. [19] and Vitsentzatou et al. [20] show that sectoral context also matters. The findings that a particular tactic has beneficial effects in a handicrafts or food-and-beverage supply chain can offer valuable insight, but they do not prove universal effectiveness across healthcare, education, professional services, manufacturing, or other sectors.

The reviewed corpus offers some international and sectoral diversity. However, it does not justify claims of complete global representativeness. Inferences about underrepresented regions should be made cautiously, and the absence of evidence from a particular market should not be construed as evidence that a strategy does not work there.

4.9. Evidence-Based Hybrid-Marketing Configurations

Based on the structured synthesis of the included evidence, the following contextual hybrid-marketing configurations were developed:

Table 4. Contextual Configurations

Organisational context	Customer and market conditions	Appropriate strategic emphasis	Supporting evidence
Resource-constrained small or emerging firm	Digitally active customers; limited marketing budget	Focused social-media presence, search visibility and customer reviews, supported by selective local partnerships or events	Kannan and Li (2017); Sharabati et al. (2024)
Established consumer brand	Diverse customer segments and broad market coverage	Traditional awareness-building integrated with digital engagement, customer analytics and consistent brand communication	Keller (1993); Kliatchko (2008)
High-involvement or professional service	Customers require trust, reassurance and detailed information	Digital information and lead generation combined with consultation, personal interaction and relationship management	Morgan and Hunt (1994); Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Retail or customer-experience organisation	Customers move repeatedly between physical and digital channels	Integrated omnichannel system connecting customer data, physical locations, mobile platforms, websites and after-sales service	Verhoef et al. (2015); Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Cross-border e-commerce firm	Customers operate across different economic and institutional markets	Market-specific digital tactics informed by local customer behaviour, infrastructure, competition and institutional conditions	Goldman et al. (2021)
Digitally transforming supply-chain organisation	Transformation involves multiple stakeholders and operational dependencies	Coordinated implementation combining technology, channel redesign, organisational capabilities and partner integration	Vitsentzatou et al. (2022); Teece (2007)
Low-digital-maturity organisation	Fragmented data, limited employee capabilities and legacy systems	Phased transformation beginning with skills development, data integration and clearly defined channel roles	Teece (2007); Kohli and Jaworski (1990)

The above configurations are evidence-based conceptual hypotheses generated from theory and empirical data. They are not statistically derived decision guidelines or generalizable rules. Each organization must evaluate their relevancy and test them empirically in their own situation and industry, customer group and country.

4.10. Summary of Findings

The paper yields four major insights. First, online marketing can confer benefits with respect to targeting, personalisation, interactivity, measurability, and scalability. These benefits are conditional on the availability of quality data, organisational capabilities, and strategic application of online marketing. Second, offline marketing can also play an effective role, serving functions related to wide reach, physical presence, trust, and human interaction. The effectiveness of offline marketing is context-dependent rather than absolute. Third, rather than simply substituting offline channels, the optimal strategic choice may be to complement offline and online marketing throughout the consumer journey. Fourth, successful complementarity is a function of organisational readiness, leadership, cross-functional collaboration, market orientation, digital capabilities, and reconfigurability of resources and processes. The success of a hybrid strategy is therefore contingent on firm, consumer, industry, geographic, and institutional factors.

5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that marketing transformation should not be seen as a linear shift from traditional to digital marketing. Rather, it is a context-dependent process in which organisations align channels, customer information, technology capabilities, employees and organisational resources. The success of the transformation is determined less by the volume of digital tools in place and more by whether they facilitate a cohesive customer journey and well-defined strategic goals.

This framing contradicts the technologically deterministic narrative that digital channels will supplant traditional marketing. Digital marketing offers important advantages in targeting, personalisation, measurement, interactivity and scalability. However, traditional channels may continue to offer value to marketing in terms of brand awareness, interpersonal trust, physical experience and connection with customers who prefer it or for whom exclusive use of digital channels is not appropriate for other reasons.

5.1. From Channel Replacement to Contextual Integration

One of the primary conclusions that can be drawn from the literature review is that there is no generic answer about the relative strategic value of traditional and digital marketing. Neither traditional nor digital marketing can always substitute for each other. The answer to this question depends on the context, including the role of channels in the customer decision journey. For instance, digital channels may fulfil the functions of information search, personalisation, comparison, interaction, transaction, and post-purchase communication, whereas traditional and physical channels may serve functions such as awareness generation, tangible experience, interpersonal reassurance, or legitimacy perceptions. The combination of channels will become strategically more relevant when the channels do not perform duplicated or conflicting functions, but rather they supplement one another.

The argument is consistent with the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) approach, which stresses the coordination of stakeholders, content, channels, and results [3]. It is also consistent with the omnichannel perspective, which draws a distinction between truly integrated customer experiences and the mere presence of several independent channels [11].

The present literature review can extend the IMC and omnichannel perspectives by suggesting that channel integration may be best aligned with firm type, customer segment, organisational digital maturity, industry requirements, and the institutional environment. The hybrid approach should therefore not be interpreted as the simultaneous use of all available channels. On the contrary, it should be seen as the selection and coordination of the channels that are most effective in achieving desired customer and organisational outcomes.

5.2. Customer Experience, Participation and Value Creation

The results confirm the definition of marketing as a process in which customers can participate and co-create value. According to Service-Dominant Logic, value is co-created in interactions and through the application of resources rather than being made by the organisation and delivered in a one-way direction to the customer [4].

Digital platforms have facilitated customer participation through reviews, online communities, social-media content, feedback, and electronic word-of-mouth. The results of Guha et al. show that social-media marketing is relevant for brand awareness, image, and equity in a specific industry context [19]. However, the organisation has limited control over user-generated content. Participation can reinforce a brand when the experience is positive, but it can also magnify discontent and inconsistency.

Lemon and Verhoef show that experiences are formed at multiple organisational and external touchpoints [2]. This means that an organisation may not be able to control all parts of the customer journey even if its own communications are aligned. As a result, effective hybrid marketing must also include monitoring, customer service, feedback management, and organisational responsiveness rather than the distribution of promotional messages.

5.3. Brand Equity, Trust and Relationship Development

The results support a view that there should be a separation between online, short-term effects and longer-term outcomes for the customer and brand. Clicks, impressions, views, and other metrics of online interaction may be proxies for customer attention but do not in themselves prove trust, loyalty, or equity.

Keller's customer-based brand-equity model also suggests that strong brands are built on customer awareness, positive associations, perceived value, and customer responses [6]. Marketing-channel decisions should be evaluated based on the role that they play in contributing to customer awareness and experiences with a brand.

Relationship Marketing Theory further reinforces the importance of trust and commitment for long-term relationship success [5]. Digital communication channels can be used to maintain contact and personalise service; traditional and interpersonal communication may give reassurance and deeper relational communication. A multi-channel approach can leverage both, as long as the customer receives the same information and service through all the available channels.

A practical implication from this perspective is that organisations should not rely on short-term online metrics when assessing the results of integrated marketing. Assessment should be based on customer retention, satisfaction, trust, loyalty, brand equity, customer lifetime value, and ultimately financial results.

5.4. Organisational Capabilities and Marketing Transformation

Another significant finding of this research is that technological investment does not guarantee marketing transformation. Our analysis identified several examples of organisations that acquired state-of-the-art platforms without attaining marketing transformation due to data fragmentation, skill gaps, system incompatibility, unclear governance, and inadequate cross-functional coordination.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory offers an apt explanation for this finding. Teece suggests that organisations must sense changes, seize opportunities, and reconfigure their resources [10]. In the context of marketing transformation, this means sensing shifts in customer behaviour and market dynamics, choosing the right technologies and channels to target these segments, and reconfiguring organisational processes, competencies, and resource allocation.

Market Orientation Theory offers another explanation. Kohli and Jaworski focus on the generation, dissemination, and organisational response to market intelligence [7]. Narver and Slater similarly point out customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination [8]. Therefore, marketing transformation also requires customer information to be shared and acted upon not just by marketing functions but also by information technology, sales, operations, and customer-service teams.

This finding is illuminating as it explains why similar technologies can lead to different outcomes in different organisations. Firms with superior learning, analytical, coordination, and change-management capabilities are in a better position to unlock the value from digital platforms than those that perceive transformation as a narrow technical exercise.

5.5. Firm Type, Customer Segment and Digital Maturity

Empirical evidence showed that the level of hybrid marketing effectiveness depends on organisational characteristics, customer segments, and digital maturity. The paper challenged the standard assumption that one size fits all in selecting and prioritising marketing channels. Instead, organisations need to base marketing channel strategies on available resources, customers' needs and characteristics, and digital capabilities.

On the one hand, organisations with limited resources may benefit from carefully selected digital marketing activities since social media, search engine visibility, and online customer reviews are more effective and less expensive ways to reach and engage more customers. On the other hand, direct and personal customer interaction, industry events, alliances, and community participation are important sources of trust, relationship building, and location-based differentiation in some situations. Traditional marketing approaches remain relevant where the nature of products and services and customer preferences make trust, relationships, and a local presence important drivers of customer purchasing decisions.

Larger and more established organisations typically have more financial and technological resources for implementing advanced analytics, marketing automation, customer relationship management, and omnichannel marketing. However, their digital transformation efforts are often hampered by legacy information systems, organisational silos, fragmented customer databases, and change management resistance. As a result, resource levels do not fully explain the degree of integration in marketing organisations.

Customer characteristics are also relevant for channel choice effectiveness. Customers' digital literacy, access to technology, privacy concerns, perceived risk, and other personal characteristics affect their response to different marketing strategies. Customer preferences for personal contact, involvement, and convenience also vary among different demographic groups. Digital capabilities often vary within these groups, making evidence-based customer segmentation important, rather than making assumptions based on broad demographics.

Organisational digital maturity is another important factor that can support or hinder integrated marketing strategy. Less digitally mature organisations should prioritise establishing reliable data management practices, employee digital skills, and responsibilities for each marketing channel. Highly digitally mature organisations, on the other hand, are more likely to benefit from an integrated customer data view, predictive analytics, marketing automation, and AI-enabled personalisation for omnichannel marketing. However, deploying advanced digital marketing technology with fragmented data and governance, weak organisational capabilities, and low-quality customer data can increase cost, decrease marketing effectiveness, and create additional privacy and security risks.

In sum, the decision to use traditional and digital marketing approaches and to integrate them to a certain degree depends on organisational characteristics, customer segments, and digital maturity. Moreover, these factors must be aligned with strategic goals for successful hybrid marketing.

5.6. Regional, Market and Institutional Differences

The evidence base is characterised by regional, market and institutional contexts. Market context, which includes digital infrastructure, available platforms, the level of economic development, social norms, regulatory environment, customer trust and the competitive landscape, influences the diffusion and success of both traditional and digital marketing. For instance, the impact of marketing strategies on customer engagement, brand loyalty and market share may vary depending on the marketing context. As a result, it is important to take into account contextual factors when designing and implementing marketing strategies and evaluate the transferability of successful marketing practices from one context to another.

The studies reviewed also provide some evidence of variations in strategic orientations and digital marketing practices in developed markets and emerging markets. For instance, the research by Goldman et al. revealed the variations in cross-border e-commerce strategies based on market characteristics, institutional environment, and consumer behaviour [21]. These findings support the need to contextualise marketing strategy design and implementation to local market conditions, rather than transferring strategies or practices from one context to another without adaptation.

Moreover, there is some industry-specific evidence that provides insights into the marketing transformation process. The research by Guha et al. [19] and Vitsentzatou et al. [20] showed the importance of industry structures, capabilities and customer expectations in the adoption and effectiveness of digital marketing. However, this evidence may be contextualised to other industries such as healthcare, education, professional services, manufacturing or the public sector, where the business environment and customer needs can be substantially different.

The distribution of included studies is characterised by an unequal geographical representation. While the evidence base provides a general understanding of the marketing transformation, some markets are underrepresented, which affects the generalisability of the findings. It is recommended that future research efforts broaden empirical inquiry to other geographic and institutional contexts, particularly in regions with distinct linguistic, regulatory, digital infrastructure and digital technology access disparities to advance a more contextualised understanding of the integration of traditional and digital marketing.

5.7. Theoretical Contribution

The main theoretical contribution of this study is that it advances an integrated, contextual hybrid-marketing framework by bringing together multiple, previously siloed perspectives.

Integrated Marketing Communications describes the unification of stakeholders, messages, channels, and outcomes. Service-Dominant Logic describes the logic of customer participation and value co-creation. Relationship Marketing Theory and customer-based brand equity articulate the longer-term value of trust, commitment, awareness, associations, and loyalty. Market Orientation Theory describes how to generate and use customer intelligence organisationally. Dynamic Capabilities Theory describes how resources can be reconfigured during organisational transformation. Omnichannel research describes coordination of customer experiences and channel role expectations in physical and digital touchpoints.

The present study makes the case that all of these theoretical perspectives are connected through four contextual dimensions: 1) firm and industry characteristics; 2) customer segments and channel preferences; 3) organisational digital maturity and capabilities; and 4) geographic, market, and institutional conditions. This work therefore moves beyond perspectives that frame marketing transformation in terms of the adoption of technology. The framework advanced in this study instead situates transformation in terms of strategic alignment across customer needs, channel roles, organisational capabilities, and environmental conditions.

5.8. Managerial Implications

The findings have several managerial implications. First, before allocating expenditure across channels, organisations should map the entire customer journey to understand the purpose of each touchpoint and detect any inconsistencies in the online and offline experience. Second, decisions about which channels to use should be based on customer evidence. Organisations should examine how different customer segments access information, evaluate alternatives, seek reassurance, complete a purchase, and request post-purchase support. Third, digital-transformation projects should not just involve the acquisition of technology, but should also address the organisational conditions of employee development, data governance, system integration, and cross-functional coordination. Otherwise, new technology may be used to support isolated activity instead of transformation. Fourth, organisations should use balanced performance measures. Short-term digital indicators may be used alongside measures of trust and satisfaction, customer retention, brand equity, customer lifetime value, and financial outcomes. Fifth, the adoption of AI-enabled marketing should be tempered with safeguards about privacy, transparency, data quality, bias, and human oversight. AI should be used to support customer value and organisational decision-making instead of just serving as a tool to increase the volume of promotions. Finally, hybrid marketing should not be set in stone. Organisations should test different channel configurations, evaluate their outcomes, and reallocate resources on the basis of customer and performance evidence.

5.9. Interpretation in Light of Evidence Quality

These conclusions should be tempered by the scope and methodological quality of the 16 publications reviewed. While the conceptual rationale of the review is based on extant conceptual and review articles published in marketing and strategic management, the primary empirical evidence available to support the relative efficacy of traditional, digital, and hybrid-marketing configurations is currently scant. The reviewed empirical articles also varied on research design, geographic and industry setting, sample attributes, and measurement. Multiple studies were cross-sectional or context-specific, which weakened causal interpretations and generalisability. Therefore, confidence should be higher in conclusions related to the importance of integration, resource implications, and contextualization than conclusions that one hybrid configuration will lead to better performance across all situations. As such, the contextual hybrid-marketing framework should be viewed as an empirically-informed conceptual model that needs further testing instead of a one-size-fits-all rule of thumb.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the aggregated evidence from the 16 studies included in this review, this review investigated how traditional and digital marketing elements can be packaged and orchestrated, and when alternative channel configurations are appropriate depending on organisational, customer, industry and market factors. The integration of the findings suggest that marketing transformation is not simply the wholesale substitution of traditional marketing by digital technologies. Rather, it is a context-dependent and multidimensional process of coordinating customer touchpoints, data, technologies, employees, organisational capabilities and performance measures.

Digital marketing offers a range of capabilities related to audience targeting, personalisation, interactivity, scalability and performance measurement. However, these capabilities depend on reliable customer data, analytical skills, appropriate governance and alignment with organisational goals. Traditional marketing also serves important functions related to broad awareness, physical presence, personal interaction, credibility and trust. Its relevance nevertheless depends on the customer segment, product or service, geographic market, and intended communication outcome.

The review found that hybrid marketing effectiveness does not automatically follow from using traditional and digital channels in combination. Rather, integration requires each channel to have a complementary and clearly defined role within the customer journey, and customers should encounter consistent information, brand presentation, service and support when transitioning across physical and digital touchpoints.

The main theoretical contribution of the study is a framework for hybrid marketing decisions that is informed by, but extends, several established theories. It integrates perspectives from Integrated Marketing Communications, Service-Dominant Logic, Relationship Marketing Theory, customer-based brand equity, market orientation, Dynamic Capabilities Theory and omnichannel research. The framework relates channel selection and integration to:

- firm and industry characteristics;
- customer segments and channel preferences;
- organisational digital maturity;
- technological and analytical capabilities;
- leadership and cross-functional coordination;
- geographic and institutional conditions; and
- customer, brand and organisational outcomes.

This holistic perspective builds on earlier reviews which have tended to focus primarily on digital-channel adoption or communication consistency. The proposed framework helps to explain why the same marketing configuration may have alternative effects for different firms, industries, customer groups and markets.

7. IMPLICATIONS

From a managerial perspective, organisations are recommended to carefully evaluate channel platforms and customer journey designs, rather than adopting new digital channels simply because they are available or because competitors use them. Channel decisions should be informed by an understanding of the customer journey, organisational readiness, strategic goals and credible evidence of performance. Investment in digital technologies should be combined with employee development, data governance, system integration, leadership commitment and coordination between marketing, information technology, sales, operations and customer-service teams.

Marketing performance measurement should also be more balanced. Digital metrics such as impressions, clicks, engagement and conversion can be useful, but should be supplemented with data on trust, satisfaction, customer retention, brand equity, customer lifetime value and financial outcomes. This helps to prevent misinterpreting short-term activity on digital platforms as evidence of sustainable marketing effectiveness.

8. LIMITATIONS

The review findings should be considered in the context of several evidence and review-related limitations. Included empirical publications varied across study design, industrial context, national context, and measurement method. Some studies had a cross-sectional design and were context-specific, self-reported, or based on expert judgment. This affects causal inference and generalisability of these findings. Limitations of the search strategy are also noted. Scopus was used as the only structured bibliographic database and sole source of primary searches, while Google Scholar was used only as a supplementary search tool. Citation searching was completed to help identify additional publications, however relevant studies that are indexed to other databases may have been missed. Limiting the primary review timeframe to English language publications published between 2020 and 2024 may have further excluded relevant research. Google Scholar results were only screened within the first 100 relevance-ranked results per search combination. Due to fluctuations in Google Scholar search rankings over time, the supplementary search strings are not perfectly reproducible. Additionally, because duplicate screening was not fully independently completed for each record, there is an increased risk of selection error or reviewer bias. Lastly, the types of publications included in this review were empirical studies, conceptual articles, and review articles. Including a large breadth of publication types allowed for better theoretical integration of findings. However, this also increased methodological heterogeneity between studies and did not allow for statistical meta-analysis. For these reasons, the presented hybrid marketing framework should be considered an evidence-informed framework for analysis rather than a one-size-fits-all decision rule. More empirical research is needed to assess other potential hybrid-marketing configurations within different industries, consumer groups, organizational maturity levels, and countries.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding Statement:. This research received no external funding.

AI Usage Statement: During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors did not use any artificial intelligence (AI) tools for text generation or editing, code, figure creation, or data analysis.

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its supplementary materials.

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APPENDIX A: DATABASE SEARCH STRATEGIES

A1. Information Sources

Scopus was used as the principal bibliographic database because of its structured coverage of peer-reviewed business, management, marketing and social-science literature. Google Scholar was used as a supplementary source to identify additional publications and conduct forward and backward citation searches.

The principal review period covered English-language publications issued between 2020 and 2024. Earlier seminal publications were identified separately and retained where necessary to establish the theoretical foundations of the review.

Source	Purpose	Search date	Coverage	Records identified
Scopus	Principal structured database search	1 October 2025; updated 20 January 2026	2020–2024	420
Google Scholar	Supplementary discovery search	1 October 2025; updated 20 January 2026	2020–2024, with seminal sources searched separately	75 unique records
Backward citation searching	Examination of reference lists	Completed 31 May 2026	No date restriction for seminal literature	No additional unique eligible study
Forward citation searching	Identification of later citing publications	Completed 31 May 2026	Up to final citation-search date	No additional unique eligible study

The resulting 75 Google Scholar records are unique records which were retained for formal screening (i.e., clearly irrelevant results and records found through Scopus were removed). They do not represent the total number of results generated by Google Scholar.

A2. Scopus Search Strategy

The Scopus search was developed around four concept groups:

1. Traditional marketing;
2. Digital and AI-enabled marketing;
3. Marketing integration and transformation; and
4. Customer, brand and organisational outcomes.

Complete Scopus search string

TITLE-ABS-KEY(
(
"traditional marketing"
OR "conventional marketing"
OR "traditional advertising"
OR "offline marketing"
)
AND
(
"digital marketing"
OR "online marketing"
OR "social media marketing"
OR "artificial intelligence marketing"
OR "AI-enabled marketing"
)
AND
(
"integrated marketing communication*"
OR "hybrid marketing"
OR "omnichannel marketing"
OR "marketing transformation"
OR "channel integration"
)
AND
(
"customer engagement"
OR "customer experience"
OR "brand equity"
OR "brand loyalty"
OR "marketing performance"
OR "organizational performance"
OR "organisational performance"
)

Scopus filters

Search element	Applied specification
Search fields	Title, abstract, and keywords
Publication period	2020–2024
Language	English

Document types	Peer-reviewed journal articles and reviews
Subject areas	Business, Management and Accounting; Economics, Econometrics and Finance; and relevant Social Sciences
Result limit	No artificial result limit
Initial search date	1 October 2025
Updated search date	20 January 2026
Records identified	420

Earlier seminal publications were not required to satisfy the 2020–2024 date restriction because they were incorporated to establish the theoretical foundations of the review.

A3. Google Scholar Search Strategy

Since Google Scholar does not have field-specific Boolean syntax like Scopus, shorter search combinations were utilized. The first 100 results (ranked by relevance) were reviewed for each combination. Records duplicates of records identified through Scopus or another Google Scholar search combination were removed. 75 unique Google Scholar records were kept for title-and-abstract screening.

No.	Search combination	Results examined
1	"traditional marketing" AND "digital marketing"	First 100
2	"traditional advertising" AND "digital advertising"	First 100
3	"integrated marketing communications" AND "digital transformation"	First 100
4	"hybrid marketing" AND "customer engagement"	First 100
5	"omnichannel marketing" AND "customer experience"	First 100
6	"word-of-mouth marketing" AND "electronic word of mouth"	First 100
7	"celebrity endorsement" AND "influencer marketing"	First 100
8	"service-dominant logic" AND "digital marketing"	First 100
9	"relationship marketing" AND "digital channels"	First 100
10	"market orientation" AND "digital marketing"	First 100
11	"diffusion of innovation" AND "marketing **technology**"	First 100
12	"brand equity" AND "online and offline marketing"	First 100
13	"digital maturity" AND "marketing transformation"	First 100

The exact number of results returned by Google Scholar was recorded at the time of each search. However, only the first 100 results from each combination were screened. Duplicate records identified through Scopus or another Google Scholar search were removed before further assessment.

A4. Seminal-Literature Search

Targeted author, title and citation searches were conducted to identify foundational publications relevant to the theoretical framework.

Theoretical area	Foundational source

Customer-based brand equity	Keller (1993)
Market orientation	Kohli and Jaworski (1990); Narver and Slater (1990)
Relationship marketing	Morgan and Hunt (1994)
Service-Dominant Logic	Vargo and Lusch (2004)
Integrated Marketing Communications	Kliatchko (2008)
Dynamic capabilities	Teece (2007)
Customer experience and customer journey	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Digital-marketing framework	Kannan and Li (2017)
Omnichannel marketing	Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman (2015)

These publications were used to establish the theoretical foundations of the review. They were not presented as contemporary empirical evidence of the effectiveness of hybrid or digitally integrated marketing strategies.

APPENDIX B: STUDY CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITY-APPRAISAL MATRIX

B1. Appraisal Approach

Empirical studies were evaluated with design-specific criteria from the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool 2018 version. Publications were coded by design prior to evaluation with MMAT criteria. Conceptual and review articles were evaluated separately using criteria for clarity of purpose, transparency of approach, theoretical coherence, coverage of relevant literature, consistency between the evidence and claims, acknowledgement of limitations, and contribution towards the review question(s).

Results of the appraisal were designated as high, moderate or low confidence. Quality ratings determined how much interpretive weight was given to a publication. Publications with low-confidence appraisal results were only used to develop contextual or emergent themes and were not used solely to make causal or generalizable claims.

B2. Characteristics and Quality Appraisal of Included Publications

Study	Type and context	Marketing focus and contribution	Principal limitation	Confidence
Goldman et al. (2021)	Comparative empirical study of 446 small cross-border e-retailers from 20 European countries	Examines the relationship between strategic orientations, digital-marketing tactics and international business performance in developed and emerging e-commerce markets	Limited to small cross-border e-retailers; developed–emerging market classifications may not capture all institutional differences	High

Guha et al. (2021)	Empirical study of the handicrafts sector in Eastern India	Examines social-media marketing strategies and their implementation in promoting handicraft products, including brand-related and market outcomes	Geographic and sectoral specificity limits transferability to other industries and markets	Moderate
Kannan and Li (2017)	Framework, literature review and research agenda	Provides an established framework covering digital technologies, customer touchpoints, marketing processes and value creation	Not a PRISMA systematic review; subsequent technological developments require more recent supporting evidence	High
Keller (1993)	Foundational conceptual article	Establishes customer-based brand equity through brand awareness, associations and customer responses	Predates digital and social-media marketing and does not directly test hybrid marketing	High
Kliatchko (2008)	Conceptual review and reformulation of Integrated Marketing Communications	Identifies stakeholders, content, channels and results as central pillars of communication integration	Predates major developments in AI, analytics and platform-based marketing	High
Kohli and Jaworski (1990)	Foundational conceptual article on market orientation	Explains market-intelligence generation, dissemination and organisational responsiveness	Does not directly address digital technologies or online–offline integration	High
Lemon and Verhoef (2016)	Integrative conceptual review of customer experience	Explains customer journeys across firm-owned, partner-owned, customer-owned and external touchpoints	Conceptual synthesis rather than direct empirical testing of a hybrid strategy	High
Morgan and Hunt (1994)	Theoretical and empirical study of relationship marketing	Establishes trust and commitment as central mechanisms underlying successful marketing relationships	Focuses on relationship exchanges rather than contemporary digital platforms	High
Narver and Slater (1990)	Empirical and theoretical study of market orientation and profitability	Connects customer orientation, competitor orientation and interfunctional	Developed before contemporary digital-marketing and omnichannel systems	High

		coordination with business performance		
Paramastri (2024)	Theoretical literature review of traditional-to-digital marketing transformation	Discusses the influence of digital technologies on marketing competitiveness, customer interaction and information management	Search, selection and quality-appraisal procedures are insufficiently transparent for a systematic review	Low–moderate
Razak et al. (2024)	Literature review and thematic analysis of digital entrepreneurship	Discusses platform business models, digital strategies, analytics and emerging technologies	Described as qualitative research but does not use participant-based qualitative data; review procedures have limited reproducibility	Low–moderate
Sharabati et al. (2024)	Quantitative cross-sectional study involving managers from 190 marketing companies	Examines digital advertising, social-media marketing, SEO, customer engagement and SME performance	Self-reported and cross-sectional evidence cannot establish causality; does not compare traditional, digital and hybrid strategies directly	Moderate
Teece (2007)	Foundational conceptual article on dynamic capabilities	Explains how organisations sense opportunities, seize opportunities and reconfigure resources during transformation	Does not focus specifically on marketing-channel integration	High
Vargo and Lusch (2004)	Foundational conceptual article introducing Service-Dominant Logic	Supports the interpretation of customer participation, service exchange and value co-creation across touchpoints	Conceptual rather than a direct test of hybrid-marketing effectiveness	High
Verhoef et al. (2015)	Conceptual review of multichannel and omnichannel retailing	Differentiates the availability of multiple channels from an integrated omnichannel customer experience	Primarily focused on retailing, limiting direct transfer to other sectors	High
Vitsentzatou et al. (2022)	Grey DEMATEL analysis in the food-and-beverage service supply chain	Identifies interdependent factors affecting the digital transformation of the marketing mix	Relies on expert judgement; findings are sector-specific and reflect perceived rather than causal relationships	Moderate

B3. Contextual Publications Excluded From the Evidence Synthesis

Publication	Classification	Treatment
Qalati et al. (2024)	Editorial addressing consumer behaviour and sustainable marketing in online and offline settings	Used only for contextual framing; excluded from empirical and causal claims
Rahman et al. (2024)	Commercially published book	May support general background discussion but excluded from the peer-reviewed evidence synthesis

B4. Interpretation of the Evidence Base

The strongest part of the evidence base consists of established conceptual and review publications addressing brand equity, market orientation, relationship marketing, Service-Dominant Logic, Integrated Marketing Communications, customer journeys, digital marketing, omnichannel retailing and dynamic capabilities. Collectively, these publications provide the theoretical foundations for understanding contextual hybrid-marketing integration.

The empirical evidence is more limited. Goldman et al. (2021), Guha et al. (2021), Sharabati et al. (2024) and Vitsentzatou et al. (2022) provide relevant evidence concerning digital-marketing practices, strategic orientation, brand outcomes, organisational performance and transformation conditions. However, these studies do not collectively establish that a particular hybrid-marketing configuration is universally superior.

The principal limitations of the empirical literature include cross-sectional research designs, self-reported data, reliance on expert judgement and concentration within specific geographic or industrial settings. Greater interpretive weight should therefore be assigned to findings supported across multiple high- and moderate-confidence sources. Low–moderate-confidence publications should be used only for contextual or emerging themes and not independently to support causal or generalisable conclusions.