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Research Article

DIGITAL MARKETING AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CUDDALORE TOWN

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Abstract

Through social media, online advertising, influencer marketing, and e-commerce platforms, digital marketing has completely changed how companies engage with their customers. Consumer awareness, preferences, and purchase behaviour have all been profoundly impacted by the growing usage of digital technologies. The purpose of the study is to investigate how customer behaviour is affected by digital marketing. Additionally, it looks at how consumer knowledge, attitudes and preferences, motivational factors, satisfaction, trust, and purchasing decisions relate to one another. The study used convenience sampling and a structured questionnaire to gather data from 100 respondents using a descriptive research approach. The findings showed that internet marketing has a big impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. While 83% of respondents said that online discounts encourage purchases, about 86% of respondents agreed that digital marketing influence purchasing decisions. Eighty percent of respondents said that digital marketing communication increases brand trust, and over eighty-two percent said that influencer marketing and online reviews affect their product preferences. Digital marketing tactics have a favourable impact on consumer decision-making, engagement, trust, and loyalty, according to correlation study, which revealed substantial positive connections between digital marketing variables and consumer behaviour. The results verify that consumer behaviour and purchase intentions are significantly influenced by digital marketing. Long-term customer relationships may be supported, brand trust can be strengthened, and customer engagement can be improved with effective digital marketing methods.

Keywords: Digital marketing, online advertising, social media marketing, influencer marketing, consumer awareness, purchase intention, online reviews, customer trust, and customer satisfaction.

Introduction

By changing how businesses interact with their customers, digital marketing has completely changed the commercial landscape. The development of smartphones, social media apps, internet technology, and e-commerce platforms has drastically altered consumer decision-making and purchasing habits. Because digital platforms allow businesses to contact directly with consumers through personalised, interactive, and quantifiable channels, traditional marketing techniques are gradually being supplanted by digital marketing strategies.

The development of digital technology has given companies new chances to connect with more people and forge closer bonds with their clients. To sway consumer opinions and promote purchases, businesses employ digital marketing strategies include social media marketing, SEO, email marketing, influencer marketing, online ads, mobile marketing, and content marketing. Digital marketing increases client involvement, contentment, and loyalty in addition to increasing communication effectiveness.

The study of how people choose, buy, use, and discard goods and services to fulfil their needs and desires is known as consumer behaviour. Numerous psychological, sociological, technical, cultural, and economic aspects affect consumer behaviour. Because they can rapidly obtain knowledge through internet platforms, consumers in the digital age are better informed and more powerful. Before making a purchase, consumers actively look for product reviews, consider user feedback, compare options, and assess prices.

The significance of digital marketing in influencing customer behaviour has been further reinforced by the growing impact of social media and online communities. Social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Twitter enable companies to produce customised content and communicate with customers instantly. Consumer trust and buying intention are now significantly influenced by influencer marketing and internet reviews.

Kotler and Keller (2016) claim that through relationship-building and targeted communication, digital marketing helps businesses to add value for their clients. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), data-driven tactics in digital marketing enhance client engagement and yield quantifiable results. Consumer decision-making is increasingly impacted by online interactions, reviews, and digital experiences, according to Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019).

Global digital transition was expedited by the COVID-19 pandemic, which also greatly increased reliance on digital communication and online buying. Customers are using digital platforms more and more to buy groceries, apparel, gadgets, healthcare items, educational services, and entertainment. Businesses were pushed to increase their digital presence to survive in highly competitive markets.

Even though digital marketing is becoming more and more important, businesses still struggle to comprehend how various digital marketing tools affect customer behaviour. Depending on their psychological and demographic traits, consumers react differently to reviews, influencer recommendations, commercials, promotions, and personalised content. Therefore, creating successful marketing strategies requires an awareness of the connection between digital marketing and customer behaviour.

The current study looks at consumer knowledge, attitudes, motivational factors, trust, and satisfaction in an effort to analyse how digital marketing affects consumer behaviour. The study also looks into how well influencer marketing, social media marketing, internet ads, promotions, and reviews influence customer purchasing decisions.

Review of Literature

Numerous scholars have investigated the connection between consumer behaviour and digital marketing. Digital marketing has a substantial impact on consumer awareness, trust, engagement, attitudes, and purchase decisions, according to prior research.

Personalised recommendations greatly increase customer satisfaction and engagement, according to research by Brown and Davis (2024) on the effects of AI-driven personalised marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Mehta and Singh (2024) studied search engine marketing and concluded that search engine advertisements positively influence consumer purchase intention by improving brand visibility.

Verma and Agarwal (2024) found that personalized advertisements enhance consumer engagement and increase purchase intention by aligning marketing content with customer preferences.

Lopez and Martinez (2024) examined omnichannel digital marketing strategies and reported that integrated digital experiences improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Nguyen and Tran (2024) studied user-generated content and found that online reviews and customer-generated posts significantly improve consumer trust and reduce perceived risk.

Rao and Shetty (2024) analyzed influencer live streaming and observed that real-time engagement and product demonstrations positively affect consumer trust and purchase decisions.

Wilson and Kapoor (2023) examined content marketing and concluded that informative and engaging digital content significantly influences consumer trust and buying behaviour.

Ahmed and Ali (2023) studied mobile marketing and found that personalized app notifications positively affect customer engagement and purchasing behaviour.

Das and Roy (2023) investigated Instagram marketing and revealed that influencer endorsements and visually attractive content strongly influence young consumers.

Khan and Siddiqui (2023) found that digital coupons and discounts significantly motivate consumers to make purchases by creating perceptions of savings and value.

Joseph and Mathew (2023) analyzed chatbot marketing and concluded that AI-powered customer support improves customer satisfaction and trust.

Lim and Wong (2023) studied gamification strategies and reported that interactive digital campaigns enhance consumer engagement and motivation.

Lee and Chen (2022) examined digital advertising and consumer trust and found that transparent and informative advertisements significantly improve consumer confidence.

Sharma and Verma (2022) analyzed influencer marketing and concluded that influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention and brand preference.

Rahman and Hossain (2022) examined online promotions and reported that cashback offers and limited-time discounts strongly encourage consumer purchases.

Online reviews and recommendations greatly increase trust and lower perceived risk, according to Kannan and Murugan's (2022) study on digital word-of-mouth.

According to Thompson and Reed (2022), retargeting ads raise purchase completion rates and enhance brand memory.

According to Prakash and Suresh (2022), consumers can make well-informed purchasing selections thanks to digital price comparison tools.

In comparison to other digital marketing channels, Smith and Taylor (2021) found that social media marketing has the biggest influence on consumers' intentions to make purchases.

Patel and Desai (2021) reported that interactive social media advertisements significantly improve customer engagement and influence buying behaviour.

Gupta and Malhotra (2021) observed that positive online reviews increase trust and purchase intention while negative reviews discourage buying behaviour.

Reddy and Kumar (2021) found that visually attractive online advertisements improve brand recall and consumer engagement.

Kumar and Sharma (2020) concluded that social media advertisements, influencer endorsements, and peer interactions strongly affect consumer awareness and purchasing decisions.

The literature consistently indicates that digital marketing meaningfully influences consumer behaviour

through awareness creation, personalization, trust-building, emotional engagement, and social influence.

Research Gap

While a number of studies have looked at the relationship between digital marketing and consumer behaviour, many have simply looked at particular digital marketing techniques, including email marketing, influencer marketing, or social media marketing. There aren't many research that combine customer awareness, attitudes, trust, motivational factors, and satisfaction into one framework.

Many previous studies also concentrated mainly on urban consumers and developed economies. Limited attention has been given to mixed demographic groups including rural and semi-urban consumers.

The present study efforts to address these gaps by analyzing multiple dimensions of digital marketing and consumer behaviour simultaneously using respondents from different demographic backgrounds.

Objectives of the Study

• To investigate how customer behaviour is affected by digital marketing.
• To research consumer knowledge of digital marketing platforms.
• To examine how consumer attitudes and preferences are impacted by digital marketing.
• To determine the driving forces behind decisions to make purchases online.
• To assess how well digital marketing contributes to client satisfaction and trust.

Hypotheses of the Study

H01: Digital marketing does not significantly influence consumer behaviour.

H11: Digital marketing significantly influences consumer behaviour.

H02: Consumers do not possess significant awareness regarding digital marketing platforms.

H12: Consumers possess significant awareness regarding digital marketing platforms.

H03: Digital marketing strategies do not significantly influence consumer attitudes and preferences.

H13: Digital marketing strategies significantly influence consumer attitudes and preferences.

H04: Motivational factors such as discounts, cashback offers, and online reviews do not significantly influence consumer behaviour.

H14: Motivational factors such as discounts, cashback offers, and online reviews significantly influence consumer behaviour.

H05: Digital marketing tools are not effective in building customer trust and satisfaction.

H15: Digital marketing tools are effective in building customer trust and satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

T Numerous ideas that explain the connection between digital marketing and consumer behaviour lend support to the study.

Consumer Decision-Making Process Theory

This theory describes the steps that customers take, including as identifying a problem, looking for information, weighing their options, making a purchase, and acting afterward. Through online ads, search engines, social media, online reviews, and e-commerce platforms, digital marketing affects every stage.

Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Model

The S-O-R model asserts that digital marketing components function as external stimuli that affect customers' emotional and cognitive states, resulting in behavioural responses like brand loyalty and purchase decisions.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Based on perceived utility and simplicity of use, the Technology Acceptance Model describes how customers embrace and utilise digital technology. Digital platforms that are easy to use have a favourable impact on consumers' online buying habits.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control all have an impact on consumer intention. Digital marketing uses social influence and compelling content to mould attitudes.

Social Influence Theory

Peer recommendations, internet reviews, influencer endorsements, and social media interactions all have a significant role in influencing consumer behaviour, according to social influence theory.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design to analyze the relationship between digital marketing and consumer behaviour.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from respondents.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from books, journals, websites, articles, research papers, and online databases.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling method was adopted

for selecting respondents.

Sample Size

The study consisted of 100 respondents.

Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were used:

- Percentage analysis
- Descriptive analysis
- Correlation analysis
- Table interpretation

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender Distribution

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	42	42%
Female	58	58%
Total	100	100%

The study found that female respondents constituted the majority of the sample population.

Age Distribution

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
Below 20 Years	24	24%
21–30 Years	58	58%
31–40 Years	15	15%
41–50 Years	3	3%
Total	100	100%

The majority of respondents belonged to the 21–30 years age group, indicating strong participation of young consumers.

Educational Qualification

Qualification	Respondents	Percentage
Higher Secondary	12	12%
Undergraduate	27	27%
Postgraduate	44	44%
Diploma	20	20%
Others	4	4%

Most respondents were well educated, with postgraduates representing the highest proportion.

Occupation

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Student	43	43%
Private Employee	23	23%
Government Employee	9	9%
Business	16	16%
Self-employed	5	5%
Housewife	4	4%

Students formed the majority of respondents.**Consumer Behaviour Analysis**

Digital Marketing Advertisements Influence Buying Decisions

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	46%
Agree	40%
Neutral	13%
Disagree	1%

The majority of respondents agreed that digital marketing advertisements significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Purchase After Seeing Online Advertisements

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31%
Agree	44%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	2%
Strongly Disagree	1%

The findings indicate that online advertisements strongly affect purchase behaviour.

Social Media Marketing Influences Product Preferences

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40%
Agree	38%
Neutral	19%

Social media marketing plays a major role in influencing consumer preferences.

Online Promotions Encourage Trial Purchases

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41%
Agree	44%
Neutral	14%

The findings indicate that online promotions motivate consumers to try new products.

Awareness of Digital Marketing Platforms

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	47%
Agree	34%
Neutral	16%

Consumers possess strong awareness regarding digital marketing platforms.

Use of Digital Platforms for Product Search

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40%
Agree	43%

Consumers actively use digital platforms to search for product information.

Online Reviews Influence Product Attitude

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32%
Agree	50%

Online reviews significantly influence consumer attitudes toward products.

Influencer Marketing Affects Product Preferences

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40%
Agree	42%

Influencer marketing strongly affects consumer preferences and purchase decisions.

Personalized Advertisements Increase Interest

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	36%
Agree	34%

Personalized advertisements effectively attract consumers.

Online Discounts Motivate Purchases

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	50%
Agree	33%

Online discounts are strong motivational factors influencing purchases.

Cashback and Promotional Offers Influence Buying Behaviour

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	36%
Agree	42%

Cashback offers and promotional strategies significantly influence consumer purchases.

Customer Reviews Influence Purchase Decisions

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45%
Agree	33%

Consumers heavily rely on customer reviews while making purchase decisions.

Limited-Time Offers Create Urgency

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35%
Agree	40%

Limited-time offers create urgency and encourage faster purchasing decisions.

Digital Marketing Communication Increases Trust

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	48%
Agree	32%

Digital communication positively affects consumer trust in brands.

Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation Value (r)	Interpretation
Consumer Awareness and Consumer Behaviour	0.709	Strong Positive Relationship
Consumer Attitudes and Preferences and Consumer Behaviour	0.705	Strong Positive Relationship
Motivational Factors and Consumer Behaviour	0.704	Strong Positive Relationship
Satisfaction and Trust and Consumer Behaviour	0.703	Strong Positive Relationship

The correlation analysis indicates strong positive relationships between digital marketing variables and consumer behaviour. The results confirm that digital marketing significantly influences consumer awareness, preferences, motivation, trust, and purchasing behaviour.

Findings of the Study

- Female respondents constituted the majority of the sample population.
- Most respondents belonged to the 21–30 years age group.
- A large proportion of respondents were students and postgraduates.
- Smartphones were identified as the most preferred internet access device.

- Digital marketing advertisements strongly influence consumer buying decisions.
- Consumers regularly use digital platforms to search for product information.
- Social media marketing significantly affects consumer preferences.
- Online promotions encourage consumers to try new products.
- Consumers possess high awareness regarding digital marketing platforms.
- Online reviews strongly influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.
- Influencer marketing significantly affects product preferences.
- Personalized advertisements increase consumer interest in products.
- Online discounts and cashback offers strongly motivate purchases.
- Limited-time offers create urgency and encourage impulse buying.
- Digital marketing communication enhances customer trust and brand loyalty.
- Correlation analysis confirmed strong positive relationships between digital marketing variables and consumer behaviour.

Suggestions

- Organizations should focus on personalized digital marketing strategies to improve customer engagement.
- Businesses should strengthen social media marketing campaigns because social platforms strongly influence consumer behaviour.
- Companies should encourage positive customer reviews to improve trust and credibility.
- Influencer marketing strategies should emphasize authenticity and credibility.
- Businesses should provide secure payment systems and transparent communication to improve customer trust.
- Online promotions and cashback offers should be strategically designed to attract consumers.
- Organizations should improve website usability and mobile responsiveness to enhance consumer experience.
- Marketers should use interactive content such as videos, live streaming, and storytelling to improve engagement.
- Digital advertisements should be informative, visually attractive, and consumer-oriented.
- Businesses should continuously monitor consumer preferences and adapt digital marketing strategies accordingly.

Conclusion

The quick development of internet technologies and online customer behaviour has made digital marketing a crucial part of contemporary business strategies. The study unequivocally shows that through awareness-raising, engagement, trust-building, personalisation, and promotional efficacy, digital marketing has a substantial impact on customer behaviour.

The findings reveal that consumers actively depend on digital platforms for information search, product comparisons, reviews, and purchasing decisions. Social media marketing, influencer marketing, online advertisements, online reviews, discounts, cashback offers, and personalized communication significantly affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

The study also confirms that digital marketing communication strengthens customer trust and improves satisfaction levels. Correlation analysis further established strong positive relationships between consumer behaviour and variables such as awareness, motivational factors, trust, and consumer preferences.

Organisations must constantly innovate and improve their digital marketing tactics in the fiercely competitive business world of today in order to satisfy shifting customer demands. In addition to influencing consumer choices, successful digital marketing strategies assist companies in cultivating enduring client relationships and brand loyalty.

The study concludes that digital marketing is a powerful tool capable of shaping modern consumer behaviour and driving organizational success in the digital economy.

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