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ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Rajeev Kumar[1], Dr. Abhimanyu Upadhyay[2]

[1] Research Scholar, School of Business Studies and Entrepreneurship, Shobhit University, Gangoh

[2] Associate Professor, School of Business Studies and Entrepreneurship, Shobhit University, Gangoh

ABSTRACT :

This study explores the role of digital marketing in influencing and reshaping consumer behaviour in the digital age. With the growing accessibility of the internet and mobile technologies, digital platforms have become pivotal in enhancing brand awareness, facilitating product discovery, and building consumer trust. Primary data collected from 385 respondents in Meerut district reveals that digital marketing significantly affects various stages of the consumer decision-making process. Notably, online advertisements and engaging digital content were found to strongly influence brand exploration and purchase decisions. The research underscores the importance of digital strategies in modern marketing and highlights the effectiveness of targeted, interactive campaigns in capturing consumer attention. The findings suggest that businesses must continuously adapt to evolving digital trends to maintain relevance and consumer engagement.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Brand Awareness, Online Advertising, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

For marketers, gaining insights into consumer behaviour is essential, as consumers form the core of all marketing efforts. This understanding is key to formulating and executing impactful marketing strategies. In the realm of digital marketing, the development of effective promotional plans hinges on a deep comprehension of how consumers behave. Modern marketing places strong emphasis on analyzing buyer behaviour to tailor strategies accordingly. Marketers need to examine consumer individuality, as it reveals emerging patterns and helps pinpoint specific market segments. To attract and retain customers, digital marketers must innovate and tailor their strategies based on a detailed understanding of customer preferences and expectations. Staying aligned with shifting consumer trends and lifestyles requires marketers to implement robust customer research techniques. Precisely collecting and analyzing such information enables organizations to meet the evolving and increasingly complex needs of consumers, both now and in the future.

Digital marketing has emerged as a vital component for the growth and success of businesses across diverse sectors. Its affordability and efficiency make it especially advantageous for small enterprises, offering them the opportunity to achieve significant outcomes with well-executed strategies. By overcoming geographical limitations, digital marketing provides a vast platform for product promotion. Leveraging targeted content and dynamic communication channels, marketers can craft strategies that closely resonate with consumer needs and preferences. The rise of the internet has not only revolutionized marketing practices but has also greatly enhanced consumer awareness. Nowadays, customers are well-informed about products prior to purchase, often relying on online platforms to explore reviews and gather insights an important factor in influencing their buying decisions.

Digital marketing has revolutionized the way businesses interact with consumers, becoming a powerful tool for fostering connections. Through the use of digital platforms, companies are now able to reach and engage their target audiences more effectively. It encompasses a range of strategies, including social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content creation, email marketing and partnerships with influencers. This multifaceted approach enables real-time communication and provides tailored experiences that greatly influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Digital marketing refers to the way through which one can display alludes to promotion depicted by using advanced channels like online entertainment, emails and portable applications. It give customer open doors to examine the product launched by companies and do comparison accordingly. Customer has access to products not only within the countries but throughout the world and all these has become possible only through digital marketing; Tailor & Kaur (2023).

Digital marketing is highly significant because it provides businesses with deep insights into consumer behaviour. Through the use of analytics tools, marketers can track customer preferences, browsing patterns, and buying history, enabling them to craft more targeted and effective strategies. This personalized approach fosters stronger customer connections, enhances brand loyalty and improves conversion rates. Furthermore, digital marketing allows companies to reach a worldwide audience, overcoming geographical limitations and expanding their market presence.

India has made rapid strides in digital advancement in recent years, driven by collaborative efforts from both the public and private sectors to enhance internet accessibility and digital tools. While many Indian businesses have embraced digital transformation, the rate of adoption varies across industries. Despite the challenges of navigating the digital ecosystem, it remains a key driver for India's future economic development. Realizing these

opportunities will require ongoing collaboration between the government, enterprises of all scales, and the broader population. With continued momentum, India's digital growth has the potential to deliver widespread benefits to both businesses and citizens.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Degeratu et al. (2000) found that consumers who shop online are generally more price-sensitive than those who shop in traditional, offline stores. This increased price awareness is largely due to the convenience of comparing prices, finding discounts, and evaluating different product options in online marketplaces.

This research seeks to explore the impact of the digital environment on consumer behaviour. As technology progresses and consumers increasingly depend on devices like personal computers (PCs), smartphones, tablets, and other portable gadgets, their purchasing habits and decision-making processes are naturally influenced. Understanding how these devices and different browsing contexts affect consumer choices is essential. A key study by Haubl and Trifts (2000) examined the role of collaborative decision-making tools in shaping consumer behaviour on online shopping platforms. Their findings emphasized how these tools influence consumer decisions, providing valuable insights into the changing patterns of digital purchasing behaviour.

Godes and Mayzlin (2004) were among the first to study the impact of online updates on consumer behaviour. Their research examined the distribution and volume of these updates to understand their influence. They found that the spread of online updates across platforms was a strong predictor of television program ratings. By analyzing how widely TV show information was shared online, they could predict audience engagement and viewership trends. Their findings emphasized the significant role of online discussions and digital word-of-mouth in shaping public perception and influencing the success of media content.

Sismeiro and Bucklin (2004) conducted a study on customized online customer behaviour, uncovering important insights. They found that frequent visits to a website do not always correlate with a higher intent to purchase. Furthermore, they discovered that offering extensive decision-making resources does not always result in successful conversions. These findings highlight that consumer behaviour in online settings is multifaceted and influenced by factors beyond just visit frequency and the availability of information.

Stephen and Toubia (2010) found that allowing retailers to interact directly with customers can generate considerable economic value within the network. This value primarily comes from better customer access to the market, which benefits both consumers and retailers. By encouraging communication, businesses can boost customer engagement, resulting in higher sales and stronger market relationships.

Edelman and Singer (2015) noted that consumer purchasing behaviour varies notably between offline and digital contexts. In traditional offline settings, the search and evaluation stages are typically more time-consuming and effort-intensive, as consumers must actively seek out information. In contrast, digital environments often simplify or accelerate these stages sometimes even allowing consumers to skip them entirely thanks to the immediate availability of product information, reviews, and comparisons, which facilitates quicker decision-making.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) developed insightful frameworks that shed light on how customer experience and engagement can be enhanced through digital technology to increase customer value. Their study highlighted the significant role of digital innovations in enriching customer interactions across multiple touchpoints, thereby strengthening the bond between businesses and consumers. By utilizing digital tools, companies can deliver personalized experiences, improve communication efficiency, and offer customized solutions that match customer preferences.

Kannan and Li (2017) presented an extensive framework for digital marketing research, concentrating on its evolution and the integration of existing studies. Their framework outlines various factors and customer touchpoints that influence digital marketing strategies. They offered a thorough review of the current research landscape in digital environments, discussing key findings and emerging trends. Furthermore, they examined the dynamic challenges linked to these touchpoints, posing critical questions for future research to deepen understanding and refine digital marketing practices.

Sathya (2017) concluded that digital marketing provides small business owners with a cost-effective and efficient way to promote their products or services. With few constraints, businesses can utilize various devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and televisions, as well as multiple digital platforms like social media and email, to reach their target audience. Sathya stressed that the effectiveness of digital marketing primarily hinges on focusing on consumer preferences, which is essential for attracting and retaining customers while improving overall marketing results.

Tariq (2021) presented a review article examining the impact of digital marketing on consumer purchase decisions. The study emphasizes that purchase decisions are influenced by a range of factors, including societal influence, word-of-mouth, cultural values, income levels, and psychological factors, rather than a single element. It highlights the significant role of digital platforms in shaping consumer behaviour in the current Web 2.0 era. To support these findings, the review analyzes 16 research articles published since 2010. The article concludes with practical recommendations for marketers to successfully digitalize their businesses and strengthen customer loyalty.

Salim and Issa (2024) conducted a study to examine the effect of digital marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour. The research investigated how different digital marketing channels, such as social media, search engines, and email marketing, influence consumer decisions. The main goal was to assess the impact of digital marketing on customer behaviour and identify the most effective platforms for businesses in the Soran independence administration to improve customer retention. The findings showed that digital marketing has a strong influence on purchasing behaviour, especially among younger, more educated individuals in the region. It provides businesses with affordable and efficient ways to address customer needs. However, the study also emphasized the need for transparency to preserve consumer trust.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To examine the role of digital marketing in changing consumer behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** The descriptive research design has been adopted for the study to examine the role of digital marketing in changing consumer behaviour.
- **Method of Sampling:** In the present study, researcher used stratified random sampling to collect the information from different respondents.
- **Sample size**: 385 Respondents
- **Primary Data:** The researcher conducted a brief primary data collection on a sample basis of Meerut district.

ANALYSIS RELATED TO ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Table 1: Table showing the response related to role of digital marketing in changing consumer behaviour

S. No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Digital marketing campaigns have increased my awareness of various brands and products.	82 (21.3%)	220 (57.15%)	23 (5.98%)	47 (12.2%)	13 (3.37%)
2	I frequently discover new products through digital marketing platforms such as social media, websites and emails.	64 (16.63%)	186 (48.31%)	64 (16.63%)	49 (12.72%)	22 (5.71%)
3	Digital marketing content (e.g., blogs, videos, social media posts) enhances my trust in a brand.	122 (31.7%)	171 (44.42%)	42 (10.9%)	40 (10.38%)	10 (2.6%)
4	I am more likely to explore a brand after seeing it advertised online.	126 (32.72%)	215 (55.85%)	20 (5.2%)	18 (4.68%)	6 (1.55%)
5	Digital marketing campaigns influence my decision to purchase a product or service.	130 (33.76%)	196 (50.9%)	19 (4.95%)	32 (8.32%)	8 (2.07%)

ANALYSIS

1. Brand and Product Awareness through Digital Marketing: The findings reveal that digital marketing campaigns play a crucial role in raising awareness of brands and products among consumers. A substantial 78.45% of respondents supported this view, with 57.15% agreeing and 21.3% strongly agreeing that digital marketing has enhanced their awareness. A smaller segment (5.98%) remained neutral, indicating some indecision. Meanwhile, 12.2% disagreed and 3.37% strongly disagreed, making up a total of 15.57% who did not find digital marketing influential in this regard. This demonstrates that digital marketing is widely perceived as an effective tool for brand communication and consumer education.

2. Product Discovery via Digital Platforms: Digital marketing platforms such as social media, websites, and email campaigns are seen as valuable avenues for product discovery. A combined 64.94% of respondents 48.31% agreeing and 16.63% strongly agreeing reported frequently discovering new products through these channels. However, 16.63% expressed neutrality, showing a moderate or undecided stance. On the other hand, 12.72% disagreed and 5.71% strongly disagreed, amounting to 18.43% who do not frequently find new products through digital marketing. These results reflect the medium's utility for introducing consumers to new offerings.

3. Building Brand Trust through Digital Content: Digital content such as blogs, videos, and social media posts significantly contributes to building trust in brands. A notable 76.12% of respondents felt that such content positively influences their trust, with 44.42% agreeing and 31.7% strongly agreeing. A modest 10.9% were neutral, suggesting uncertainty. Conversely, 10.38% disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed, totaling 12.98% who did not associate digital content with increased trust. This indicates that engaging, transparent, and informative content can strengthen brand credibility and consumer relationships.

4. Influence of Online Advertisements on Brand Exploration: Online advertising appears to be highly effective in encouraging consumers to explore new brands. A strong 88.57% of respondents-55.85% agreeing and 32.72% strongly agreeing admitted they are more likely to engage with a brand after seeing its advertisement online. Only 5.2% of respondents remained neutral. On the contrary, 4.68% disagreed and 1.55% strongly disagreed, making up just 6.23% who are not influenced by online ads. This data suggests that digital advertising significantly drives initial consumer interest.

5. Impact on Purchase Decisions: Digital marketing has a considerable influence on consumer buying behaviour. A total of 84.66% of participants-50.9% agreeing and 33.76% strongly agreeing reported that such campaigns affect their purchase decisions. A minimal 4.95% maintained a neutral position, while 8.32% disagreed and 2.07% strongly disagreed, together forming 10.39% who are less affected by digital marketing when making purchasing choices. These insights underscore the persuasive strength of digital campaigns in converting interest into sales.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that digital marketing plays a transformative role in influencing consumer behaviour across various stages of the buying journey. It is widely perceived as an effective means of enhancing brand and product awareness, enabling consumers to discover new offerings through platforms like social media, websites, and email campaigns. Moreover, digital content helps build brand trust by fostering transparency and engagement, while online advertisements actively encourage brand exploration. Most importantly, digital marketing significantly impacts purchase decisions, demonstrating its power in converting consumer interest into actual buying actions. Overall, digital marketing emerges as a key driver in shaping modern consumer perceptions and behaviour.

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