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The Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Strategies in Promoting Local Brands: Evidence from Restaurants and Cafés in Hyderabad, Telangana

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ABSTRACT

Digital Marketing is now a critical method of creating awareness, obtaining customers, informing about specials and advertising brands within the Restaurant & Café Industry. This research will explore how Digital Marketing can be utilized to advertise Local Restaurant & Café Brands in Hyderabad, Telangana. A Quantitative, Descriptive and Cross-Sectional Approach was used by administering a Structured Questionnaire via Google Forms. There were 75 usable responses in total. The Questionnaire included Demographic Characteristics, Social Media Usage, Restaurant Discovery, Preferred Digital Content, Online Reviews, Advertisements, Discounts, Influencers, Google Search/Maps, Food Delivery Apps, Behavioral Responses and Overall Perceived Effectiveness. Data was analyzed using Frequencies, Percentages, Mean Scores for 12 Five-Point Likert Statements, an Exploratory Composite Analysis and a One-Sample T-Test for Overall Effectiveness. Findings indicate that Instagram was the most commonly used Social Platform (61.3%), while Videos/Reels and Food Photographs were the most appealing Content Formats (30.7% each).

Additionally, 77.3% stated they visited a Restaurant after seeing it on Social Media and 81.3% stated they ordered Food due to an Online Advertisement or Offer.

Overall, 81.3% rated Digital Marketing at least Moderately Effective and 56.0% rated it Very or Extremely Effective. The Overall Effectiveness Mean was 3.65/5. Based upon these results, the Study concludes that Digital Marketing has a significant impact on Restaurant Discovery, Evaluation, Trial and Recommendation among the Surveyed Respondents.

However, since Convenience Sampling and Self-Reported Data were used in this Study; the Findings should be viewed as Descriptive Evidence for the Surveyed Group rather than Population-Level Causal Evidence. Keywords: Digital Marketing, Local Brands, Restaurants, Cafés, Social Media, Online Reviews, Instagram, Customer Behavior, Hyderabad

1. Introduction of the Study

The use of social media, search platforms, online reviews, food delivery apps, and short-form video has changed how consumers find and assess restaurants and cafés. Digital channels allow local brands to reach consumers directly while also providing them with the opportunity to showcase products, share promotions, receive reviews, and create a recognizable brand identity. Restaurants and cafés are especially well-suited for digital marketing because they can visually communicate food photos, short videos, reviews, location details, and promotional offers quickly. However, the success of a digital marketing strategy will depend on what consumers see and how their digital experience affects discovery, trust, trial, purchase, and recommendation. This study looks at consumers in Hyderabad, Telangana, and studies their digital media habits and views on restaurant and café promotions. Rather than assuming that all digital channels have equal impact, this study compares respondents' self-reported experiences using social media, reviews and ratings, discounts, influencers, videos/reels, Google Search/Maps, delivery apps, and online ads.

2. Research Gap

Digital marketing has been found to be positively associated with restaurant visibility, competitiveness, customer behavior, purchase intentions and/or engagement; however, there is very little research available from the perspective of consumers regarding digital marketing in Hyderabad. In addition, previous studies have varied by location, target audience and outcomes, which makes it difficult to use the results of those studies to make inferences about restaurant and café consumers in Hyderabad. There is also a major gap in terms of how customers interact with multiple digital touch points. For example, a customer might see a restaurant on social media, read reviews, find the restaurant's location on Google Maps, look at photos, notice an offer and then order through a delivery app. By studying all of these interactions together we can gain a better understanding of the customer journey.

Therefore, this study will examine awareness, attraction, trust, discovery, behavioral response, trial, recommendation and overall perceived effectiveness. This study is being conducted as local descriptive evidence. Since convenience sampling was used to select participants, the results cannot be used to provide population level causal estimates for all consumers in Hyderabad.

2.1 Review of Literature

Year	Study / Author(s)	Main Focus	Key Finding	Gap Identified
2024	Digital Marketing Adoption by Restaurants – A Study with Reference to Demographic Factors	Restaurant digital-marketing adoption	Adoption differs across demographic groups	Limited regional evidence
2022	Shiwangi Singh et al. – Impact of Digital Marketing on the Competitiveness of the Restaurant Industry	Restaurant competitiveness	Digital marketing improves competitiveness	No Hyderabad focus
2024	A Study on How Marketing on Digital Platforms Affects Customer Behavior in Bhilwara City's Restaurant Industry	Customer behaviour	Digital marketing positively affects customers	Single-city evidence
2024	Analysis of the Utilization of Digital Marketing as a Business Strategy in Cafes and Restaurants	Business strategy	Improves visibility and sales	Not India-specific
2024	Effectiveness of Digital Marketing to Increase Purchase Interest of Cafe Visitors	Purchase interest	Increases purchase intention	No local-brand analysis
2024	Be Direct! Restaurant Social Media Posts to Drive Customer Engagement in Times of Crisis and Beyond	Customer engagement	Direct messaging improves engagement	Not Hyderabad

3. Objectives of the Study

Describe how much time respondents spend using digital media and how often they see ads for restaurants and cafés in Hyderabad. Identify the types of digital platforms and content that respondents prefer to use to discover new restaurants and cafés in their area. Evaluate respondents' perceptions of different digital touchpoints (such as social media, photos of food, Reels, reviews, deals/offers, ads, influencers, Google Search/Maps, and food delivery apps). Summarize the behaviors that respondents report experiencing as a result of digital marketing (including visiting restaurants, ordering food, intending to try something new, and recommending). Assess the overall effectiveness of digital marketing in promoting local restaurant and café brands in Hyderabad. Assess the overall effectiveness of digital media marketing in promoting local restaurant and café brands in Hyderabad.

4. Hypothesis

H0: Overall perceived effectiveness of digital marketing for local restaurants and cafes is equal to the neutral midpoint (3). H1: Overall perceived effectiveness of digital marketing for local restaurants and cafes is greater than the neutral midpoint (3). Alignment note: Objectives related to usage, platforms/content, digital touchpoints, and reported behavior are descriptive; they will be addressed using frequencies, percentages, and Likert-item means. The inferential hypothesis is applicable only to the fifth objective, overall perceived effectiveness. An exploratory one-sample t-test against the neutral midpoint of 3 resulted in $t = 4.62$ and $p < 0.001$, which supports higher-than-neutral perceived effectiveness in this sample. However, because of the ordinal measure and convenience sample, this result cannot be considered as population-level or causal.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study will use a descriptive, cross-sectional design utilizing a Google Forms survey. This design is suitable as it will examine usage patterns, content preferences, digital influences and perceived effectiveness at a single point in time.

5.2 Sample Design

The final dataset includes 75 valid responses. This study used a non-probability convenience sample because there was no evidence that the Google Forms responses were chosen from a random sampling frame. Therefore, the results will be presented as descriptive evidence of the survey participants.

5.3 Data Collection

Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained demographic questions; digital usage questions; platform/content questions; 12 five-point Likert scale items (Questions 11-22); behavioral questions; strategy preference questions; trial/recommendation intention questions, and an overall effectiveness rating question.

5.4 Questionnaire Preparation

The questionnaire was divided into five sections: respondent profile, digital-media usage, digital discovery and content, digital marketing's impact, and behavioral/overall efficacy. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess the Likert statements.

5.5 Data Analysis Techniques

For each categorical question, frequencies and percentages were determined. For the 12 Likert-scale questions, means were computed; in addition, a summary descriptive score was created by averaging the scores from questions 11-22. An exploratory one-sample t-test was conducted on the overall effectiveness question. Question 7 was a multiple-response question; therefore, the number of times each platform was mentioned was counted individually and percentages may exceed 100%.

5.6 Reliability of Likert Items

The 12 Likert items in questions 11-22 yielded an exploratory Cronbach's alpha of 0.822; which indicates that there is a high degree of internal consistency for this sample.

However, while this reliability estimate is indicative of consistency, it does not provide evidence of either validity or generalizability.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretations

The study was conducted using 75 participants. This summary of the findings will include all of the main survey variables as well as an explanation of what they mean; however, it will not reproduce each of the 29 individual charts that were used in order to keep this research paper at the required length of 10-12 pages.

Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Sample size	75	Final usable responses
Age 18–25	62 (82.7%)	Sample is strongly concentrated among younger respondents
Students	66 (88.0%)	Findings strongly reflect student digital habits
Instagram most-used platform	46 (61.3%)	Instagram is the dominant social platform in the sample
Frequent/very frequent ad exposure	56 (74.7%)	High exposure to restaurant/café digital advertising
Videos/Reels	23 (30.7%)	Jointly most attractive content format
Food photographs	23 (30.7%)	Jointly most attractive content format
Visited after social-media exposure	58 (77.3%)	Strong reported association between exposure and visit
Ordered due to online ad/offer	61 (81.3%)	Strong reported association with purchase behaviour
Reviews changed choice at least sometimes	63 (84.0%)	Reviews have substantial decision relevance
Likely/very likely to try	52 (69.3%)	Positive digital content supports trial intention
Likely/very likely to recommend	48 (64.0%)	Good digital reputation may support recommendation
At least moderately effective	61 (81.3%)	Overall perception is positive
Very/extremely effective	42 (56.0%)	More than half report high effectiveness

Indicator	Result	Interpretation
Mean of Q11–Q22	3.13 / 5	Moderately positive overall Likert perception
Overall effectiveness mean	3.65 / 5	Above the neutral midpoint

6.1 Analysis of Likert-Scale Statements

Item	Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Q11	Social media helps me discover new local restaurants and cafés.	3.33	Highest mean; social media is strongly associated with discovery.
Q12	Attractive food photos influence my interest in a restaurant or café.	3.17	Moderately positive influence of visual food presentation.
Q13	Short videos/Reels influence my decision to try a restaurant or café.	3.12	Moderate influence, consistent with the popularity of Reels.
Q14	Online reviews and ratings influence my restaurant choice.	3.19	Moderate-to-positive role of reviews in choice.
Q15	Positive customer comments increase my trust in a restaurant or café.	3.16	Customer comments moderately strengthen trust.
Q16	Discounts and special offers promoted online encourage me to visit a restaurant.	3.16	Online offers have a moderate visit-promoting effect.
Q17	Online advertisements increase my awareness of local restaurants and cafés.	3.04	Advertising contributes to awareness, though responses are mixed.
Q18	Influencer or food-blogger recommendations influence my restaurant choices.	2.96	Lowest mean; influence is comparatively mixed.
Q19	Google Search and Google Maps help me find restaurants and cafés.	2.97	Useful discovery tools, but less influential than social media in this sample.
Q20	Food delivery apps influence my awareness of local restaurants.	3.05	Moderate contribution to awareness.
Q21	Digital marketing makes local restaurants and cafés appear more attractive.	3.31	Second-highest mean; digital presentation improves perceived attractiveness.
Q22	Digital marketing helps local restaurants and cafés build a strong brand image.	3.05	Moderate perception of brand-building value.

6.2 Behavioural and Strategy Results

Measure	Result	Interpretation
Restaurant visit after social-media exposure	58 / 75 (77.3%)	A substantial proportion reported a visit after seeing a restaurant on social media.
Food order due to online advertisement/offer	61 / 75 (81.3%)	Digital promotional exposure is strongly associated with reported ordering behaviour.
Online reviews changed restaurant choice	63 / 75 (84.0%)	Reviews have strong social-proof relevance.
Most influential strategy	Social media marketing (37.3%)	Social media was the most selected single strategy, followed by reviews/ratings and discounts/offers.
Likely/very likely to try new local restaurant	52 / 75 (69.3%)	Positive digital content is associated with relatively strong trial intention.
Likely/very likely to recommend	48 / 75 (64.0%)	Digital reputation may support recommendation behaviour.

6.3 Integrated Interpretations

The results show that digital marketing works through multiple interrelated channels and not just through one promotional channel. Social media is especially helpful during the discovery phase; food photos and Reels provide visual content that makes a restaurant more visible. Reviews and ratings provide social proof as consumers can see what other consumers have experienced prior to making their own decision. Online offers and ads seem to be more closely related to reported order behavior. Additionally, the results separate attraction from trust. An attractive post can initially attract attention, but reviews, comments, ratings and a consistent digital presence can assist consumers in evaluating whether the business is trustworthy.

Therefore, for local restaurants and cafes, being visible without a trustworthy reputation may not be enough to produce long-term customer responses.

The relatively lower mean scores for influencer recommendations and Google Search/Maps do not imply that these channels are unimportant generally. They indicate only that, within this sample, respondents reported stronger influence for other digital touchpoints. A balanced strategy using different channels for different purposes is therefore more appropriate than relying entirely on one promotional method.

6.4 Graphical Analysis of Survey Data

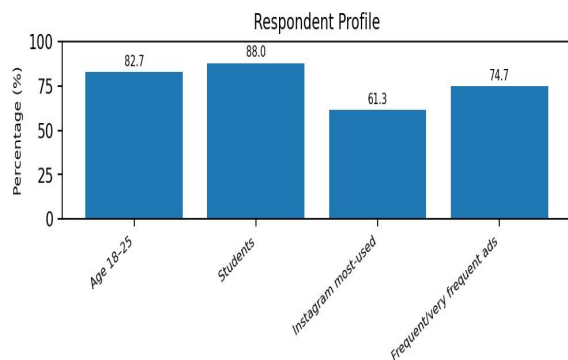


Figure 1. Consolidated respondent and digital-exposure profile.

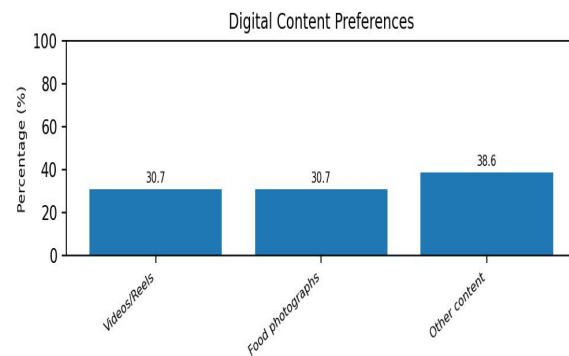


Figure 2. Most attractive digital content formats.

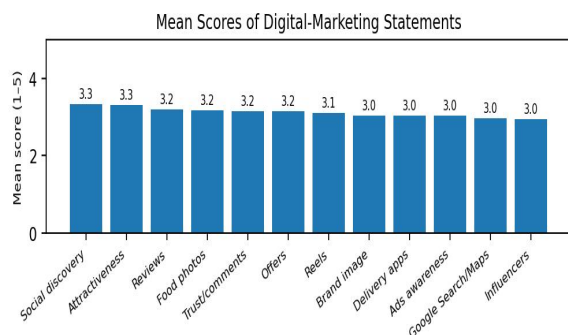


Figure 3. Mean scores of the 12 Likert-scale statements.

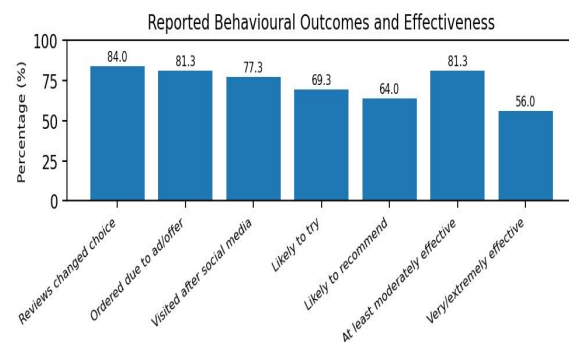


Figure 4. Reported behavioural outcomes and overall effectiveness.

7. Findings

- Usage and exposure to advertising: 74.7% of participants observed restaurant/café digital advertisements frequently or very frequently.
- Platforms and content: Instagram was the most-used platform (61.3%); videos/Reels and food photographs were the most appealing types of content (30.7% each).
- Perceived digital touchpoints: Social-media discovery had the highest Likert mean (3.33/5), followed by digital marketing making restaurants/café look more attractive (3.31/5). Influencer recommendations (2.96/5) and Google Search/Maps (2.97/5) had lower means in comparison to other items in this study.

Reviews and ratings: 84.0% indicated that online reviews had influenced their restaurant choice at least some of the time.

Reported behavior: 77.3% stated they visited a restaurant based upon seeing it on social media, and 81.3% stated they ordered food due to an online advertisement or offer.

- Objective 4 — Strategy, trial and recommendation: Social media marketing was the most chosen single strategy (37.3%); 69.3% were likely/very likely to try a new local restaurant after viewing positive digital content, and 64.0% were likely/very likely to recommend a restaurant/café with good online reviews and digital presence.
- Objective 5 — Overall effectiveness: 81.3% rated digital marketing at least moderately effective, while 56.0% rated it very or extremely effective. The overall effectiveness mean was 3.65/5, which is above the neutral midpoint.
- Hypothesis decision: The one-sample t-test ($t = 4.62$, $p < 0.001$) supports H1 and rejects H0 for this surveyed sample only; the result is exploratory and does not provide evidence of causation or population-wide generalizability.
- Reliability: The 12 Likert items had an exploratory Cronbach's alpha of 0.822, indicating good internal consistency within this sample.
- 69.3% are likely or very likely to try a new local restaurant after viewing positive digital content.
- 64.0% are likely or very likely to recommend a restaurant/café with good online reviews and digital presence.
- 81.3% rate digital marketing at least moderately effective, while 56.0% rate it very or extremely effective.
- The overall effectiveness mean is 3.65/5, above the neutral midpoint.
- The Likert items show good exploratory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.822.

8. Suggestions

- Local restaurants and cafes need to have an active presence on Instagram since it is the most popular social media platform among the participants.
- Food photography and short-form video/reels are the most effective forms of visual content for businesses; therefore, businesses should focus on creating quality food photos and short-form videos/reels.
- Restaurants need to actively monitor and respond to online reviews and encourage customers to provide honest feedback about their experience at the restaurant. Reviews often play a role in how people make decisions about which restaurants to visit.
- Digital offers and promotions can be used effectively by businesses, however, they must be presented along with high-quality products and credible customer reviews.
- Businesses must ensure that their Google Search/Maps listing includes accurate information including address, hours of operation, photos, and responses to reviews.
- When choosing influencers to partner with, businesses should base their decision on whether or not the influencer has a relevant audience and is credible, rather than simply based upon the number of followers the influencer has. Influencers' recommendations had varying degrees of impact.
- Businesses should measure success using metrics such as reach, engagement, map actions, inquiries, orders, repeat visits, and review growth rather than just impressions.
- Future research should include larger and more diverse samples from different age groups, professions, and neighborhoods within Hyderabad. If possible, future research should also utilize probability-based sampling.

10. Limitations of the Study

- The total number of participants (75) is small.
- Convenience/non-probability sampling was used to select the participants; therefore, we cannot make generalizations about the entire population.
- Most of the participants were young adults (18-25 years old) and students, which could lead to an over-representation of younger people's digital behaviors.
- Data were self-reported and may have been subject to recall/response bias.
- This was a cross-sectional study and cannot prove a causal relationship between exposure to digital marketing and visiting/ordering from restaurants.
- Before submitting this article for publication, please verify all literature references provided in the original study with their respective sources.

11. References / Literature Sources

2024. Multiple Authors. Digital Marketing Adoption by Restaurants – A Study with Reference to Demographic Factors. Research Journal.
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2028. Multiple Authors. Effectiveness of Digital Marketing to Increase Purchase Interest of Cafe Visitors. International Journal.
2029. Multiple Authors. Be Direct! Restaurant Social Media Posts to Drive Customer Engagement in Times of Crisis and Beyond. MDPI. Note: The literature details above were reproduced from the literature review material supplied with the study. Bibliographic details should be cross-verified against the original publications before journal submission.

12. Annexures

Annexure I – Questionnaire

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your occupation?
4. How often do you visit restaurants or cafés in Hyderabad?
5. How much time do you spend on social media each day?
6. Which social media platform do you use most often?
7. Which digital platforms do you use to discover restaurants and cafés?
8. How often do you notice digital advertisements from restaurants and cafés?
9. What type of digital content attracts you most?
10. Do you follow restaurants or cafés on social media?
11. Social media helps me discover new local restaurants and cafés.
12. Attractive food photos influence my interest in a restaurant or café.
13. Short videos/Reels influence my decision to try a restaurant or café.
14. Online reviews and ratings influence my restaurant choice.
15. Positive customer comments increase my trust in a restaurant or café.
16. Discounts and special offers promoted online encourage me to visit a restaurant.
17. Online advertisements increase my awareness of local restaurants and cafés.
18. Influencer or food-blogger recommendations influence my restaurant choices.
19. Google Search and Google Maps help me find restaurants and cafés.
20. Food delivery apps influence my awareness of local restaurants.
21. Digital marketing makes local restaurants and cafés appear more attractive.
22. Digital marketing helps local restaurants and cafés build a strong brand image.
23. Have you ever visited a restaurant because you saw it on social media?
24. Have you ever ordered food because of an online advertisement or offer?
25. Have online reviews ever changed your decision about choosing a restaurant?
26. Which digital marketing strategy influences your restaurant/café choice the most?
27. How likely are you to try a new local restaurant after seeing positive digital content about it?
28. How likely are you to recommend a restaurant or café that has good online reviews and digital presence?
29. Overall, how effective is digital marketing in promoting local restaurants and cafés in Hyderabad?

Annexure II – Data Analysis Notes

The dataset contains 75 responses and 29 substantive survey questions. Question 7 allows multiple selections, so platform mentions were analysed separately. Questions 11–22 were treated as five-point Likert items. In the overall-effectiveness hypothesis test, categories were coded 1–5 in increasing order of effectiveness. The analysis is exploratory and should not be interpreted as a causal estimate for the entire Hyderabad population.