

The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Decisions in the Garhwal Region

Surendra Singh Jagwan*, Nirmesh Sharma**, Ashwani Sharma***

Abstract

This research explores the influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchasing decisions within the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, India. In this study, researchers explored the impact of various digital marketing tools, such as social media, email marketing, online advertisements, content writing, mobile marketing, etc., on individual purchasing decisions. It is important to understand consumer behaviour and the factors affecting purchasing decisions on a longitudinal basis. Previously, various studies were focused on the role of digital marketing on consumer purchasing decisions, but mostly researchers suggested doing such studies on a longitudinal and geographical basis for the generalisation of their studies. As digital platforms continue to evolve, businesses have increasingly turned to online channels to engage with their target audience. Garhwal region of Uttarakhand is primarily small businesses, and it becomes important to understand the effects of digital marketing in the demographics of such a geographical area, like Garhwal, to tailor their strategies as per purchasing behaviours for local consumers.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Advertisement, Consumer Purchase Decision

Furthermore, digital marketing refers to a wide range of commercial tactics that leverage digital technologies to reduce the cost of marketing and help in the growth of businesses worldwide (Rafiq & Malik, 2018). Customers are happy when they shop online, so digital marketing is becoming a more popular technique to grow a business than traditional ways because it feels more secure. (Alzyoud, 2018). The observed change in customer behaviour implies that digital marketing has huge development potential, which will enable businesses to successfully respond to shifting market dynamics.

The Garhwal region of Uttarakhand is more than 70% covered with hilly areas, where mostly micro, small, & medium enterprises (MSMEs) are established. Furthermore, with the advent of new technologies, new digital customers are also being added, which is a considerably good opportunity for marketers to serve their products via digital marketing because potential customers are now equipped with smartphones and using them for education, entertainment, and online purchasing. Thus, studies on digital channel marketing will have significant effects on how businesses operate. Organisations must also reorganise their digital marketing efforts due to shifting consumer behaviour. Moreover, consumer decision-making processes are influenced by digital marketing.

Consumers in Garhwal face a variety of circumstances that influence their daily shopping decisions. The way people live their daily lives has changed in the use of social media platforms, mobile applications, internet apps, and other digital communication channels. Customers' active participation in choosing product and service development has changed the balance of power away from producers and towards customers.

Whereas substantial studies on digital marketing and consumer purchasing behaviour exists in so many

Introduction

The Internet has created several options for businesses involved in digital marketing in recent times. Companies can utilise a range of digital marketing tools to advertise or promote their products and services online to expand their customer base, attract potential customers, and increase their return on investment (ROI). Digital marketing has perceived usefulness and its one of the important tools, Social Media has had a huge impact on the purchase decision of the consumer (Alalwan, 2018).

* Research Scholar, Quantum University, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India. Email: surendrajits@gmail.com

** Associate Professor, Quantum University, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India. Email: nirmesh0120@gmail.com

*** Associate Professor, Institute of Hospitality, Management & Sciences, Kotdwar, Uttarakhand, India.

countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia, and China. Uttarakhand's Garhwal region is still comparatively unexplored in this area. This study tries to close this gap by looking into the effect of digital marketing tools on consumer purchasing decisions in the Garhwal region's market. The research explores the importance of different digital marketing platforms, including search engine marketing (SEM), online advertising (OA), social media marketing (SMM), email marketing (EM), and content marketing (CM). The purpose of this investigation is to provide insights into the usefulness of these platforms for marketers as well as their impact on consumer decision-making processes in Garhwal.

Research Objective

This study aims to investigate the impact of various digital marketing strategies on customer purchasing decisions. The researcher's goal in this study is to investigate the impact of SEM, SMM, CM, EM, and OA on the purchase behaviour of Garhwal clients.

Literature Review

Digital Marketing Tools

Saura et al. (2021) emphasised the great impact of the Internet's evolution and integration of traditional marketing methods, which resulted in the use of digital marketing approaches extensively adopted by both MSMEs and major enterprises. Unlike replacement, Kotler et al. (2016) explained that digital marketing is intended to coexist happily with traditional marketing, with each performing dynamic roles along the customer's journey. In the current digital age, the key for brands is to maintain an easily discoverable website and maximise online presence to attract a large audience (Mishra, 2020). This emphasises the interconnectedness of traditional and digital marketing methods to provide a holistic brand approach.

According to Peter and Vecchia (2021), the rapid evolution of technology and changing customer expectations are driving the broad adoption of digital marketing. In agreement, Kotler et al. (2016) explained that when customers negotiate emerging disruptive technologies, their emotions fluctuate between enthusiasm and anxiety. Furthermore, Rindfleisch and Malter (2019) stated that

the transformative potential of digital gadgets, which use algorithms for communication and engage in deep understanding, has drastically changed marketplace dynamics by redefining the information that is useful to marketers. This demonstrates the delicate relationship between technical advancement, customer emotions, and strategic alternatives in marketing paradigms.

In recent times, the importance of digital marketing has grown significantly in India and Uttarakhand. Marketers are increasingly using this rising marketing tactic to boost product and service sales. The evolution of digital marketing has resulted in significant changes in how brands and organisations use digital technology and platforms to achieve marketing objectives (Rai, 2018). As a result, digital marketing activities are becoming more popular and effective, easily blending into marketing strategies and everyday life. People are increasingly choosing digital platforms and cell phones over traditional brick-and-mortar establishments (Mahalaxmi & Ranj, 2016).

Digital marketing is a way to communicate electronically via the internet by using various channels used by marketers to advertise items and services on the market. It especially refers to attracting online customers to sell products and services across computer systems or Internet networks (Rao & Ratnamadhuri, 2018). This electronic approach to marketing not only reflects the changing consumer behaviour but also aligns with the contemporary trend of digital reliance.

In essence, digital marketing assists marketers in targeting people through a variety of channels, because these channels are dynamic and interconnected, marketers may effectively communicate with their target audience while adjusting to the changing preferences and habits of today's consumers. The usage of digital platforms has become a crucial part of the marketing environment, providing firms with innovative techniques to engage their audience and encourage business growth.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Terrance et al. (2017) define SEM as the set of actions that include search engine optimisation (SEO). SEM is a marketing method that is aimed at increasing the visibility of online content in search engines, either through free or sponsored traffic. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is

the practice of increasing website traffic, page visibility, and ranking in search engine results pages (SERPs). SEO is an important component of digital marketing for small businesses since it allows them to reach new customers and expand their operations. A website's ranking in SERPs is decided by several factors, including the quality of its content, the quantity and quality of backlinks, and the presence of relevant keywords. Small businesses can boost their SEO by focusing on these characteristics and employing several SEO tactics, including keyword research, content optimisation, and link development.

Online buyers frequently utilise search engines to learn about products and prices. Following the search, the buyer creates a consideration set that includes the vendors whose websites were visited during the search process. These seller websites are discovered by browsing either the editorial or paid placement sections of the search results, which are constructed using keyword searches. Notably, scientific research shows that many internet searchers and consumers skip sponsored links in the paid-placement section.

Social Media Marketing (SMM)

SMM is a means to connect with target customers easily and quickly. This strategy is differentiated by the use of several social media apps and websites. It seeks to promote a company and its products. It is a way to showcase products online via online networking platforms (Omar & Atteya, 2020). Through analytics apps incorporated into official social networking platforms, SMM has evolved to create and improve new channels for organisations, providing marketers with better information (NUR DP, 2021).

In essence, social media refers to the internet-based channel that enables and encourages participation in sharing their views, photos, videos, etc. Popular social networking sites include YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. With brands actively recruiting and interacting with their audience through these channels, these platforms function as forums for marketers to have meaningful discussions with customers (Budiman, 2021). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as an internet-based platform or app built on web technology concepts that allow for the creation and sharing of information. Social media platforms are made

to enable quick, easy, and real-time content sharing, which promotes dynamic interactions between brands and their target market. Social media has displaced traditional marketing methods due to the development of highly competitive markets and technologies (Alnsour, 2018).

Content Marketing (CM)

According to Fadillah and Setyorini, R. (2021), CM seeks to attract and retain customers by providing useful material that motivates users to interact with it, as well as improving interaction with businesses or organisations. Customer feedback may lead to increased customer involvement. Customer input on CM can help map the various aspects of customer involvement. The goal of mapping the customer engagement dimension is to identify trends in consumer contact and engagement. Mahendra (2021) defines CM as a method of developing and spreading knowledge using websites and social media. Creating exceptional content will undoubtedly encourage customers to engage with the brand. Companies should be able to create verbal or nonverbal content that influences visitors to visit their website and motivates them to make purchases. CM influences consumers through presenting benefits and features of items, affecting their understanding of needs and purchasing decisions (Kajtazi & Zeqiri, 2020).

Email Marketing (EM)

This form of marketing is one of the oldest formats of online marketing. It allows you to send orders and messages directly to a particular customer. EM allows companies to customise communications to each customer's demands and incorporate them into purchase decisions (Nawaz & Kaldeen, 2020). It is a type of direct marketing that uses emails to deliver promotional content and engage people (Lodhi & Shoaib, 2017). EM is a vital component of modern marketing strategies and, in its most general form, refers to any email sent directly to current or future customers (Rai, 2018).

Email is indeed one of the most important communication tools for marketers, helping them successfully communicate their brand value propositions to their target market. According to Reimers et al. (2016), customers

use email to simultaneously inform businesses about their preferences and desires. The dynamic link between businesses and consumers is highlighted by the reciprocal nature of this communication channel.

Email content must be personalised to ensure that messages are received favorably by the audience and to optimise the effectiveness of EM. According to Bismo and Putra (2019), email advertising is perceived favorably when their demands are understood, the timing is appropriate, and the content is created with the preferences of the customer in mind. This presents practitioners with alternatives and chances. EM is essentially an effective tool for fostering relationships, increasing engagement, and encouraging deep exchanges between companies and their target audience.

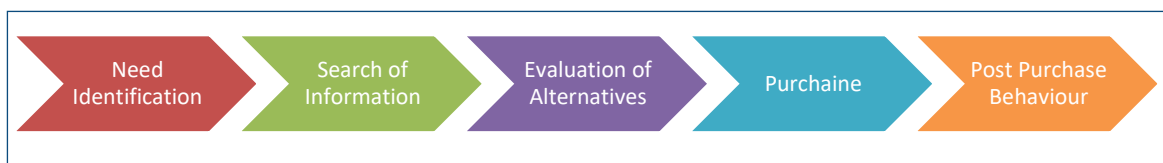
Online Advertising (OA)

OA has become a powerful tool for influencing consumers to make wise purchases and for reaching a large audience with information. It is more effective when information is given in an appealing environment, allowing the audience to easily accept it (McCoy et al., 2007). This marketing technique uses websites to display ads and drive traffic toward targeted online or offline businesses (Budiman, 2021). One advantage of OA is the ability to market products and services regardless of location (Khan & Islam, 2017).

OA, often known as internet advertising, allows businesses to publish information about their products or services, catching opportunities to reach customers across numerous online platforms, raise product awareness, and drive future sales (Dhore & Godbole, 2019). The flexibility of Internet advertising allows businesses to easily update information about their products, services, and offerings, assuring adaptation in a dynamic economy (Lim et al., 2011; Afzal & Khan, 2015). As consumer preferences and needs for a variety of products and services continue to expand, manufacturers seek faster and more effective strategies to secure customer loyalty. Busen et al. (2016) defined display advertising as a set of activities that allow businesses to advertise online, to engaging and communicating with their audiences in an interactive and relevant manner, regardless of device or mobile network.

Purchase Decision

Consumers are defined as people who buy goods or services for personal consumption from the market (Qazzafi, 2019). Following the study of options, the consumer decision-making process moves on to the critical step of purchasing decisions. Kotler & Keller (2006) explained the process of consumer decision-making (Fig. 1).



Source: Kotler & Keller Marketing Management book (2006).

Fig. 1: Consumer Decision-Making Process

During the phases of information search and evaluation of alternatives, consumers formulate opinion about the brands, products, or services under consideration, with the ultimate goal of purchasing their preferred brand.

In online purchasing, marketers can play a critical role in ensuring that consumers receive their items and that the purchasing experience is simple and straightforward (Bucko et al., 2018). Using internet-based marketing technology, such as email, social media, online marketing, and Smartphone apps, can assist improve the customer

buying experience during the purchasing process. These channels expedite operations such as ordering, purchasing, and payment, thereby saving customers time and money (Qazzafi, 2019).

It is critical to recognise that, despite customers carefully navigating all of the decision-making phases, purchasing decisions frequently depend on smart promotion. This underscores the continued importance of displaying advertisements to the right customers and offering them the right product, online or offline.

Demography of Garhwal Region

As per the TRAI report, UP West has more than 70% telecom density. It has equality in the gender ratio. As per the census report 2011, most people are aged between 30 to 45. Consumer purchasing behaviour in the Garhwal region encompasses the full process, from product selection and purchase to usage and disposal, which is impacted by personal interests and preferences.

Research Gap

As per the literature review, it has been noticed that previous studies on digital marketing were mostly focused

on different geographical areas and such studies have not been ever done on the Garhwal region. It also has been seen that different researches were focusing on specific digital marketing tools, whereas a combined digital marketing tools impact was done in few researches. So it was a requirement to test some more digital marketing tools. In any research longitudinal research is always required to generalise the result time to time basis.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, the researcher has developed a conceptual framework (Fig. 2).

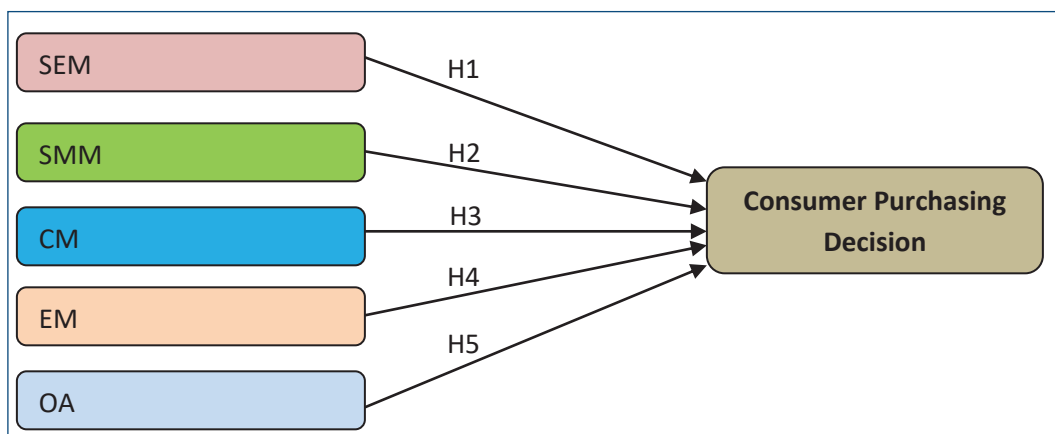


Fig. 2: Conceptual Frameworks

Research Hypotheses

Here are the alternative hypotheses derived from the literature review for study:

H1: SEM positively influences consumer purchasing decisions among consumers in the Garhwal region.

H2: SMM positively influences consumer purchasing decisions among consumers in the Garhwal region.

H3: CM positively influences purchasing decisions among consumers in the Garhwal region.

H4: EM positively influences purchasing decisions among consumers in the Garhwal region.

H5: OA positively influences purchasing decisions among consumers in the Garhwal region.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher will describe an empirical study approach for analysing purchasing decisions. Furthermore, to achieve the research objectives, the correlation between independent and dependent variables will be studied using the statistical methods indicated below. As a result, this study employed a quantitative approach to investigate the impact of variables on the behavioural gap in purchasing decisions.

Research Design

This is an empirical study with correlational research. Correlation research examines the relationships between various concepts, categories, or variables (Hair et al., 2012). A correlation study is a quantitative, multi-subject design in which students are not randomised at random to

treatment conditions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). Seeram (2019) suggests that factors such as varied measurement or study design can influence correlation research on the magnitude of two components.

Data Collection

In this study, the data was collected through online and offline methods. During this study, 450 customers were targeted to collect data, but only 102 customer's valid data was collected through the Garhwal region. Primary and secondary, data have been collected during this study. Secondary data has been taken from various available literatures. Primary data was collected through Google Forms and direct interview methods (Table 1).

Table 1: Data Collection Report

1	Gender	Male	67	65.68%
		Female	35	34.32%
2	Age	18-30	58	56.86%
		30-50	30	29.41%
		More than 50	14	13.72%
3	Occupation	Students	42	41.18%
		Private Job	41	40.19%
		Government Job	11	10.78%
		Self-Employed/Business	8	7.84%

Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher employed the statistical tool, i.e., SPSS software, for data analysis. The researcher first analysed the data through descriptive analytics, mean and standard deviation, and further correlation and regression analysis.

Findings of the Research

In this study, the target population from Garhwal region provided their opinions and after analysis, these results were generated.

Table 4:

	Purchase Decisions	SEM	SMM	CM	OA	EM
Purchase decisions	1					
SEM	0.272**	1				
SMM	0.422**	0.415**	1			
CM	0.233**	0.292**	0.284**	1		
OA	0.351**	0.374**	0.343**	0.233**	1	
EM	0.187**	0.209**	0.242**	0.268**	0.233**	1

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis Report

Sr. No.	Component	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	SEM	3.79	0.885
2.	SMM	4.24	0.516
3.	CM	4.02	0.688
4.	OA	3.76	0.912
5.	EM	4.06	0.434
6.	Purchase decisions	4.15	0.597

Reliability Test

The reliability analysis indicates that all variables in the study, SEM, OA, SMM, EM, CM, and purchase decisions, exhibit acceptable to high levels of internal connectivity (Table 2).

Researchers normally strive for a Cronbach's alpha, which indicates strong reliability, and all variables in this analysis meet or exceed this level. However, OA and SMM are on the low end of the permitted spectrum. Potential item adjustments or additions may be investigated to increase dependability in future research (Table 3).

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha Test Report

Sr. No.	Variables	Number of Items	Alpha
1.	SEM	6	0.72
2.	SMM	6	0.81
3.	CM	6	0.76
4.	OA	6	0.71
6.	EM	6	0.71
7.	Purchase decisions	6	0.83

Correlation Analysis

Here is the result of the correlation analysis through Pearson correlation.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The presented data is the outcome of a multiple regression study with the dependent variable “Purchasing Decision” and the independent variables of digital marketing. Here is an analysis of the regression coefficients:

Table 5:

Model	Dependent Variable (Purchase Decisions)		
	B	Beta	Sig
SEM	0.161	0.200	0.000
SMM	0.435	0.451	0.000
CM	0.148	0.200	0.000
OA	0.297	0.215	0.000
EM	0.131	0.205	0.000

As a result, all five independent variables show statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable, Purchasing Decision.

SMM has the highest Beta coefficient, indicating the greatest positive influence on purchasing decisions, followed by OA, SEM, CM, and EM. In Garhwal region EM have low significant over consumer purchasing behaviour.

Conclusion

This study evaluates the effectiveness of several digital marketing platforms in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, India. It was based on the investigation of effect of these digital marketing channels on consumer purchasing behaviour. The survey employed both online and offline questionnaires, with convenient sampling procedures used to obtain client responses. Out of the 450 distributed questionnaires, where 102 samples were obtained after excluding incomplete responses, resulting in a 22.66% response rate from willing participants.

In summary, five hypotheses were confirmed, indicating that the five independent factors had a positive influence on customer purchasing decisions. Among these digital marketing techniques, targeting stands out as the most important aspect in influencing customer purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the study findings show that

SMM had the greatest influence on consumer decisions during the assessment stage. Furthermore, EM is ranked as the least influential component in consumer purchasing decisions in the Garhwal area.

Limitations and Future Scope

This research suggested digital marketing is having the positive influence over consumer purchasing behaviour. It also generalises the previous research. In previous research results EM was playing a significant role, whereas in this research, EM influence was lesser as comparable. In this study researcher used 102 participants data, so future research should be conducted with the broad data with diverse population may provide different yield. This research was conducted with some common digital marketing tools. Future research should be done with some more tools evolving with the time. Longitudinal study is always required for new changes or generalisation of the results.

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