



A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DIGITAL MARKETING: PARADIGM SHIFT IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of Covid-19 on digital marketing and understand the future of digital marketing post-Covid-19. Digital marketing is a branch of marketing that promotes goods and services through the use of the internet and digital technologies such as computers, mobile phones, websites, social media networks, application software, e-mail, and other platforms. Digital marketing is the execution of marketing plans and tactics through the use of the internet and other associated digital channels. The widespread of Covid-19 has had a major impact on digital marketing and publicizing. During the global pandemic, there was a predominant behavioural shift towards digital platforms and contents which enables marketers to connect with consumers easily. It also made marketers socially responsible. The study has a sample size of 165 participants. Percentage analysis, chi-square, and Correlation were used for the research. Based on the results it is identified that there is a significant relationship between age and social media networks. Also, there is a significant relationship between the online shopping experience during the pandemic and frequency of purchasing through online during the pandemic.

Key Words: Digital Marketing, Covid-19, Social Media, Consumer Behaviour

Introduction:

Digital marketing is a branch of marketing that promotes goods and services through the use of the internet and digital technologies such as computers, mobile phones, websites, social media networks, application software, e-mail, and other platforms. Digital marketing strategies involve efforts to adopt the advertising to different platforms and to customize the advertising to different buyers and also to different devices rather than a large coherent audience. Although digital marketing and advertising had been growing steadily, the outbreak of Covid-19 provided an unwelcome boost, trapping people at home with little to no work to do and influencing a rapid change in behavior toward digital networks, digital media, and digital content.

During the worldwide pandemic, digital technologies have become a major enabler of connectedness, allowing us to go about our daily lives while connecting people in ways we've never seen before. More people have resorted to their computers and smartphones as a lifeline and tools to replace their in-person activities online as towns and governments have asked the public to stay at home. The global outbreak has led to the following impacts:

- A rise in social media engagement cleared the way for a rise in social media marketing.
- Increased demand for video and micro video content
- Emphasis on experimental marketing
- Demand for OTT content centers is surging.
- Increased product research among customers

Statement of the Problem:

In terms of breadth and extent of worldwide spread, casualties, economic impact, and detrimental influence on public health, COVID-19 was the greatest pandemic in human history. The COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on marketing strategies. During this crisis, digital marketing has gotten greater attention and money. The majority of clients have gone online and are spending more time there. All marketing initiatives revolve around the customer. The digital marketing methods used by businesses to communicate with clients have also evolved as a result of the pandemic. This research focuses on the impact of Covid-19 on the digital marketing of people in Coimbatore.

Objectives:

- To study the concept of digital marketing and analyze the impact of Covid-19 on digital marketing
- To know current trending tools of digital marketing and analyze the consumer reactions to social media network
- To analyze the future role of digital marketing post Covid-19

Reviews:

Mason et al (2021) examined how the Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in consumer marketing

behavior. He used the consumer decision-making model as a framework to investigate changes in consumer's social media behaviors as they perform various consumer decision-making processes. Analysis of variance test was performed to examine the differences in consumer's social media as a consumer decision-making tool. From his findings, it is identified that there was growing importance for social media marketing since the pandemic.

Pandey (2021) focused on the digital marketing practices during the post-Covid-19 period using a case study analysis of five companies. He analyzed their digital marketing strategies, growth drivers, the shift in approach, challenges, and strategies used to manage the crisis by these organizations. The conclusions from the primary data gathered through semi-structured interviews with industry leaders highlighted the importance of safety-related communication, creative persuasive communication, paid media, adaptability, and top-level management assistance in crisis management.

Jebril (2020), states that Covid-19 has emerged due to the lack of a vaccine, rapid geographic spread, and specific diagnostic tests. She has suggested having a more important strategic response to professionally deal with Covid19 and the need for more effortful strategies and tactics in developing countries so that outbreaks can be controlled easily.

In the article, Jandri (2020) mentioned that the only way to prevent the coronavirus from spreading is for all levels of society to practice discipline and peace. He encourages the researcher community to contribute to post-digital research in crisis situations by conducting research on educating people, preventing panic, big data analysis, and open science, as further research would be crucial for understanding the effects and preparing the human race for long-term survival.

Ayush et al (2020), studied the impact of covid-19 on digital marketing. He stated that there was a predominant behavioural shift of consumers towards digital platforms and digital content which led marketers and brands to connect with consumers digitally more than before. There was an increased social media engagement. This also made marketers become more socially responsible while implementing digital marketing strategies.

According to a study conducted by Nielsen et al (2020), when Covid-19 occurred, more than half of the customers reduced their frequency of visiting physical stores, 80% reduced their out-of-home consumption, and 39% purchased more frequently via online shopping channels. Since the introduction of Covid-19, the kind of commodities sought and purchased have changed dramatically, with 76 percent of searches focusing on hygiene items, 63 percent on travel plans (albeit 22 percent were canceled), and home-cooking and eating becoming more popular (63 percent). One of the most notable difficulties is that around 64% of Vietnamese are willing to continue their new habits of ordering food online or purchasing things via the internet even after the pandemic has passed (Hawley).

Research Design:

This study is descriptive in nature. The primary data was collected from college students above 20 years in Coimbatore. For this investigation, the convenience sample technique was used. The sample size was 165 respondents who were active in social media and preferably choosing online mode shopping in Coimbatore. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, Chi-square, and Correlation has been used for this study.

Analysis:

Table 1

Age * Best medium of networking/site to communicate its product or service to target its customer						
Count		Best medium of networking/site to communicate its product or service to target its customer				Total
		Facebook	Instagram	Gmail	Others	
Age	20-25 years	6	124	2	5	137
	25-30 years	3	6	0	2	11
	30-35years	1	1	0	0	2
	35-40years	1	0	1	0	2
	Above 40 years	8	2	1	2	13
Total		19	133	4	9	165

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

From the above table it is been identified that majority of the youngsters were felt the best medium of social media sites to communicate its product or service to its target customer is Instagram.

Table 2: Relationship between age and social media network

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.624 ^a	12	.000

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

There is a positive significant relationship between age and preference of social media networking/site to communicate its product or service to target its customer as the level of significance is at 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, it results that there is significant relationship between age and preference of social media network.

Table 3: Comparison between online shopping experience during the pandemic and frequency of purchasing more through online during the pandemic

Purchasing more through online during this pandemic				F	Sig
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	
Good	104	2.17	1.226	.120	3.632 0.029
Bad	8	1.50	1.414	.500	
Neutral	53	2.64	1.520	.209	
Total	165	2.29	1.357	.106	

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

There is significant difference between online shopping experienced during the pandemic and frequency of purchasing is increased through online during this pandemic as the level of significance is at 0.029 which is less than 0.05.

Suggestions:

- As the digital world has become concentrated than ever users are more exposed to marketing and its techniques. Hence marketers need to stand out from the crowd and find innovative ways for it. They can involve more in personalized marketing as it makes it easier for consumers to search and get their results soon.
- The number of users in social media grew to a huge number during the pandemic. Also, consumers spent a lot more time on these platforms to connect with people. This trend continues. Thus, marketers can make use of social media platforms to connect with their consumers. However, it needs to be unique, relatable, and professional to make it a success.
- As there is a massive shift towards digital marketing, firms need to increase their investment in digital platforms post Covid-19 to sustain in the market.
- Since majority of the respondents told Instagram is best media to communicate its target customer regarding the products, Marketers need to understand the customer’s tools and data to stay ahead of their competitors. This will help in capturing a large market and attracting more consumers in a short period.
- A certain social media platforms produce negative feelings for few consumers, it would be enlightening for marketers to research the relationships between a social media platform and the consumer behaviour to know increased purchases and consumer post-purchase satisfaction.

Conclusion:

As a result, digital is at the core of all businesses, and digital marketing is an important tool in the hands of brands and marketers for executing marketing strategies during the pandemic era. While the marketing industry as a whole has been greatly affected, the area of digital marketing has seen a significant boost. Covid19 has placed digital marketing on the fast track, paving the way for future growth and enhancement of digital marketing activities. According to a Deloitte survey, Covid-19 has changed the way businesses operate overnight. It has also aided businesses who use digital marketing, as there was an 18% rise in digital revenue growth in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter of 2019. While businesses must recognize that this situation will not last forever, it is also not a one-time occurrence. They must maintain their foot holds in terms of market presence, as it will be more difficult to recover later if they lose momentum.

The expansion of e Commerce and internet use has already become a major feature of life and economics, but the current crisis may help to accelerate that development. This means that the value of digital marketing which is already critical for small businesses as conventional marketing yields ever-weaker returns on investment will grow even further throughout and after the Covid 19 crisis. As the world is moving towards digital development, marketing will also need to move more digitally. Marketers must adapt their tactics and buyer personas to a post-pandemic reality.

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