

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY FOR ONLINE RETAILERS

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative research investigates the transformative influence of digital marketing on customer behavior within the context of online retail. In a time where consumer interactions are heavily reliant on the digital landscape, it is critical for businesses to comprehend the intricacies of this relationship in order to manage and benefit from the always changing market trends. This study examines the relationship between various digital marketing strategies and the ensuing changes in consumer behavior using a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire contains various questions about the experiences of customers using online platforms. With the questionnaire being divided into sections that helps accurately determine the impact of digital marketing and use of online platforms on customer behavior. The questionnaire includes the experience on using digital platforms, advantages, and the effects on consumer in terms of purchase decisions. By analyzing data collected from a select group of respondents, the goal is to find patterns, trends, and important factors that influence consumers' decisions when they shop online. The study's conclusions add to the understanding of how digital marketing affects consumer behavior and provide online businesses with practical advice on how to improve customer engagement in a market that is becoming more and more competitive.

KEYWORDS

Digital Marketing, Customer Behavior, Online Retailers, Online Platforms, Digital Media

1. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of commerce, the advent of digital marketing has redefined the dynamics of customer engagement and behavior within the realm of online retail. Businesses hoping to succeed in the competitive e-commerce landscape must comprehend the enormous impact that digital marketing techniques have on customer behavior as more and more consumers shift their shopping decisions online. With the goal of offering a thorough quantitative examination of the effects of digital marketing campaigns on online retailers, this study explores the complex relationship between customer behavior and these initiatives. The researcher aims to provide organizations with useful insights that help guide strategic decision-making and improve their capacity to effectively engage with and satisfy the changing requirements and preferences of their tech-savvy clientele by dissecting the intricacies of this dynamic interplay.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing

Marketing plays a pivotal role in business by fostering strong relationships with customers, delivering value, and driving satisfaction. A group researcher emphasize that the core of modern marketing revolves around creating and managing profitable customer connections (Kotler et al., 2015). Effective marketing strategies are essential for businesses to communicate and deliver value, ultimately leading to customer loyalty and profitability. The ability to consistently meet or exceed customer expectations through marketing efforts not only enhances customer satisfaction but also strengthens the brand's position in the market,

making it a vital component of any successful business strategy.

Some researcher discusses the challenges businesses face in developing and executing innovative marketing strategies (Slater et al., 2010). They highlight that both firm-level and market-level factors can influence the effectiveness of these strategies, making it critical for companies to adapt their approaches to different circumstances. Their research underscores the importance of understanding these dynamics to provide managers with insights on resource allocation for optimal business performance. By doing so, businesses can better navigate the complexities of their environments, ensuring that their marketing strategies are both innovative and effective in driving performance.

Morgan reflects on the critical role marketing has historically played in explaining organizational performance (Morgan, 2012). The need to demonstrate marketing's value has intensified, especially during economic downturns when resources are scarce, and the pressure to justify expenditures is high. Recent studies have made significant progress in linking marketing activities with financial and competitive performance, offering empirical evidence that marketing is a key driver of business success. This evolving understanding challenges the traditional view of marketing as a cost center and positions it as a strategic asset that contributes directly to a company's bottom line.

2.2 Digital Marketing

The rise of the internet has profoundly impacted how businesses market their products and services, creating new opportunities and challenges for marketers (Kumar, 2009). Bala and Verma note that digital marketing demands swift and accurate information gathering about consumers, products, and market conditions (Bala and Verma, 2018). This real-time

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data is essential for making informed decisions that can enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Internet marketing, a subset of electronic commerce, has grown in popularity as it enables businesses to reach broader audiences and conduct transactions online, thus broadening their market reach and customer base (Kumar, 2005).

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick describe how digital marketing has transformed business-customer interactions, offering more choices and convenience for consumers (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The digital landscape allows businesses to engage with customers in ways that were previously impossible, such as through personalized content and interactive platforms. This shift allows smaller businesses to compete more effectively by reaching new markets and engaging with customers in innovative ways, leveling the playing field with larger corporations. The digital landscape also presents opportunities for marketers to learn and apply new techniques to enhance competitiveness, making it a dynamic and ever-evolving field.

A group researcher explores the scope of digital marketing, which extends beyond internet marketing to include offline channels such as SMS, social media, and display advertising (Yasmin et al., 2015). They highlight the importance of digital media in attracting and engaging customers, positioning it as a critical tool for modern marketing strategies (Kumar et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2023). By leveraging various digital channels, businesses can create a comprehensive marketing approach that reaches customers through multiple touchpoints, enhancing the overall customer experience. This multifaceted approach not only helps in building brand awareness but also in driving customer loyalty and long-term business growth.

2.3 Customer Behavior

Understanding customer behavior is essential for effective marketing, as it directly influences how businesses design their strategies and engage with their target audiences. A group researcher introduces the concept of customer engagement behaviors (CEBs), which go beyond purchasing to include activities like blogging, writing reviews, and word-of-mouth promotion (Van Doorn et al., 2010). These behaviors are integral to the customer-to-firm relationship and play a crucial role in shaping the customer experience. By fostering CEBs, businesses can build stronger, more meaningful connections with their customers, leading to increased loyalty and advocacy.

Durmaz and Diyarbakırloğlu delve into the complexities of consumer behavior, noting that it involves the decision-making processes of individuals, groups, and organizations when selecting, purchasing, and disposing of products and services (Durmaz and Diyarbakırloğlu, 2011). They emphasize that consumer behavior is influenced by a variety of psychological and social factors, making it unpredictable and challenging to analyze. Marketers must comprehend these behaviors to predict consumer actions and tailor their strategies accordingly, ensuring that their marketing efforts resonate with their target audience. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for creating effective marketing campaigns that not only attract but also retain customers.

A group researcher expand on the concept of customer engagement (CE) by exploring its social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components (Vivek et al., 2012). Their research suggests that CE is a vital element of relationship marketing, with implications for customer loyalty, trust, and brand involvement. They propose a customer engagement model that considers the various factors that influence customer participation in a company's offerings and activities, whether initiated by the company or the consumer. A model provides a framework for businesses to enhance customer engagement, which in turn can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term business success (Kumar et al., 2009).

2.4 Online Retailers

The quality of the online shopping experience significantly influences consumer behavior, making it a critical focus for e-retailers. Ha and Stoel identify key factors such as privacy, security, customer service, and website functionality that impact e-shopping satisfaction and intention (Ha and Stoel, 2012). Their findings suggest that while privacy and customer service are critical for purchase intentions, they may not directly affect overall satisfaction, indicating that other factors may play a more significant role in shaping the customer experience. Understanding these nuances allows e-retailers to better tailor their platforms to meet customer needs and expectations, ultimately driving higher levels of customer satisfaction and repeat business.

A group researcher examine the factors that drive consumers' online purchase intentions, including quality orientation, brand orientation, and online trust (Ling et al., 2010). They highlight the importance of these elements in fostering customer confidence and encouraging impulse buying in an online environment. Their research suggests that building trust through quality products and reliable service is crucial for online retailers aiming to convert browsers into buyers. By focusing on these factors, e-retailers can enhance their overall performance and increase their market share in the competitive online retail space.

Some researchers focus on the customer experience within online shopping platforms, a critical aspect of e-retailing that influences consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Rose et al., 2012). They propose a model that links the antecedents and outcomes of online customer experiences, offering insights into how e-retailers can enhance their platforms to provide more engaging and effective shopping experiences. By understanding the cognitive and affective components of customer experience, businesses can design their online platforms to better meet the needs of their customers, leading to improved customer retention and business success.

2.5 Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Behavior

The growing use of digital media has prompted businesses to adapt their marketing strategies to better connect with consumers in the digital age. Smith investigates the preferences of Millennials, finding that online coupons, side-panel ads, and visually appealing content are particularly effective in capturing their attention and influencing their behavior (Smith, 2011). The study reveals that Millennials are more likely to respond positively to digital marketing efforts that offer tangible benefits, such as discounts and rewards. This insight is crucial for businesses aiming to engage this demographic, as it highlights the importance of tailoring marketing strategies to the specific preferences and behaviors of target audiences.

A group researcher explore how social media influences consumer perceptions of online advertisements, a critical area of interest for digital marketers (Vinerean et al., 2013). Their study identifies various user types and suggests that tailoring digital marketing efforts to these segments can optimize engagement and effectiveness. By segmenting users based on their online activities and preferences, businesses can create more personalized and relevant marketing campaigns, leading to higher levels of customer engagement and satisfaction. This approach not only improves the effectiveness of digital marketing but also helps build stronger relationships with customers.

Ioanăs and Stoica discuss the transformative role of technology in consumer behavior, particularly through social media, where consumers now actively participate in the marketing process (Ioanăs and Stoica, 2014). They highlight how consumers use digital platforms not only to research and critique products but also to engage more deeply with brands, thereby influencing their purchase decisions. This shift in consumer behavior underscores the importance of social media as a powerful tool for businesses to connect with their audiences and build brand loyalty. By leveraging the interactive nature of social media, businesses can create more meaningful and lasting relationships with their customers, ultimately driving long-term success.

3. METHODS

The study employed a quantitative research design to explore the relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer behavior, specifically focusing on how different marketing approaches influence online purchases. Data was collected via an online survey using Google Forms, distributed to randomly selected participants. The survey aimed to provide objective statistical data regarding how digital marketing impacts purchasing decisions. The study was conducted in the Philippines, targeting customers familiar with various online shopping platforms, and took place from November 2023 to January 2024.

Participants were chosen without restriction to any specific platform, ensuring a general perspective on online retail behavior. Participants included Filipino customers aged 12 and above who had experience with online shopping and exposure to digital marketing. The survey gathered basic demographic information and focused on closed-ended questions to determine the effect of digital marketing on consumer behavior. The data collection process ensured ease of participation through the use of Google Forms, providing a streamlined approach to understanding customer responses to digital marketing efforts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Responses for Digital Marketing Awareness Question 1		
<i>How do you typically become aware of promotions or products offered by online retailers? (e.g., social media, email, search engines, TV commercials)</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Email newsletters	2	2%
Social Media Advertisements	71	71.7%
Search Engine Results	4	4%
Online Retailer Websites	2	2%
Mobile Apps	13	13.1%
Word of Mouth	2	2%
Deal websites or forums	0	0%
In-store promotions	3	3%
Push Notifications	0	0%
TikTok	1	1%
Own research method, its needed	1	1%

Table 1 illustrates how the respondents typically become aware of promotions or products offered by online retailers. The majority, 71.7% (71), primarily learn about these promotions through social media advertisements, highlighting the significant impact of social media in marketing strategies. The second most common source is email newsletters, which account for 13.1% (13) of the responses, indicating that traditional digital marketing via email still holds considerable influence. Other sources, such as search engine results, online retailer websites, mobile apps, word of mouth, deal websites or forums, and in-store promotions, constitute much smaller portions of the awareness methods. These sources collectively represent less than 15% (15) of the responses, suggesting that while they contribute to consumer awareness, their impact is relatively minor compared to social media and email newsletters.

Table 2: Responses for Digital Marketing Awareness Question 2		
<i>Which of the following digital marketing channels in terms of their influence on your purchasing decisions is the most common: (Social media, Email marketing, Search engine ads, Influencer marketing, etc.)</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media Advertisements	47	47%
Email Marketing	1	1%
Search Engine Ads	2	2%
Influencer Marketing	6	6%
Reviews and Ratings	24	24%
Content Marketing (Blogs, Articles)	90	9%
Website Pop-ups and Banners	0	0%
Mobile App Notifications	2	2%
Online Discounts and Coupons	0	4%
Video Advertisements	2	2%
Affiliate Marketing Links	2	2%
Brand Websites	1	1%

Table 2 depicts the primary digital marketing channels influencing the purchasing decisions of 100 respondents. Nearly half, 47% (47), report that social media advertisements have the greatest impact on their buying choices, underscoring the power of social media in shaping consumer behavior. Email marketing is identified as the second most influential channel, affecting 24% (24) of the respondents, which signifies the ongoing effectiveness of targeted email campaigns. Reviews and ratings also play a notable role, with 9% (9) of participants citing them as a significant influence. Influencer marketing and content marketing, such as blogs and articles, each sway 6% (6) of the respondents. The remaining channels, including search engine ads, website pop-ups and banners, and mobile app notifications, exert a minimal influence on purchasing decisions, collectively accounting for less than 8% (8).

Table 3: Responses for Factors Affecting Customer Engagement Question 1		
<i>How important is personalized content in influencing your engagement with online retailers?</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Very Important)	29	29%
4 (Quite Important)	35	35%
3 (Important)	28	28%
2 (Less Important)	6	6%
1 (Not Very Important)	0	0%
0 (Not Important at All)	2	2%

Table 4: Responses for Factors Affecting Customer Engagement Question 2		
<i>Have you noticed a difference in your engagement with online retailers that use personalized marketing content compared to those that do not?</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Significantly Higher Engagement)	18	18%
4 (Higher Engagement)	37	37%
3 (No Difference)	37	37%
2 (Lower Engagement)	6	6%
1 (Significantly Lower Engagement)	2	2%

Table 5: Responses for Factors Affecting Customer Engagement Question 3		
<i>To what extent do you consider the trustworthiness and credibility of an online retailer's digital marketing content when making a purchase decision?</i>		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Very Important)	33	33%
4 (Quite Important)	32	32%
3 (Important)	29	29%
2 (Less Important)	3	3%
1 (Not Very Important)	2	2%
0 (Not Important at All)	1	1%

Tables 3, 4, and 5 shows the responses on the Factors Affecting Customer Engagement of the survey questionnaire.

Table 3 shows the perception of the respondents on the importance of personalizing content in influencing engagement with online retailers. Most of the respondents, 35% (35), say that having personalized content is quite important to having customer engagement, while 29% (29) say that it is very important. The next most common response is "Important" with 28% (28) of the respondents. Very few of the respondents say that personalized content is not important at all in influencing engagement with online retailers, with 8% (8) of the responses collectively.

Table 4 indicates how the presence of personalized marketing affects engagement with online retailers. More than half of the respondents collectively say that they notice a higher engagement and a significantly higher engagement due to the presence of personalized content at 55% (55). Meanwhile, 37% (37) of the respondents also say that there are no difference in customer engagement even with personalized marketing content. Lastly, very few of the respondents collectively say that they notice a lower engagement at 8% (8).

Table 5 highlights how the respondents consider the trustworthiness and credibility of an online retailer's digital marketing content when making a purchase decision in terms of importance

Almost all of the respondents say that it is important to consider the trustworthiness and credibility of an online retailer. 65% (65) of the respondents say that it is very important or extremely important, while 29% (29) say that it is important. A significantly lower number of respondents say that it is not important at 5% (5).

Table 6: Responses for Omnichannel Experience Question 1

How often do you engage with online retailers through multiple channels (e.g., website, mobile app, social media) during a single purchase journey?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Always)	16	16%
4 (Very Often)	29	29%
3 (Often)	40	40%
2 (Not Very Often)	7	7%
1 (Seldom)	5	5%
0 (Never)	3	3%

Table 7: Responses for Omnichannel Experience Question 2

Does the consistency of the online retailer's message across different channels influence your perception of the brand?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	94.9%
No	5	5.1%

Tables 6 and 7 shows the responses on the Omnichannel Experience section of the survey questionnaire. Table 6 demonstrates the respondents' frequency of using multiple channels in a single purchase. The most common response is that they sometimes use multiple channels in a single purchase journey at 40% (40). The next most common, with 29% (29) of the responses is that they say that they often use multiple channels. This is followed by 16% (16) of the responses saying that they always use multiple channels. Only a few of the respondents at 15% (15) say that they do not use multiple channels that often during a single purchase. Table 7 illustrates if the consistency of the online retailer's message across different channels influence the respondents' perception of the brand. The majority of the respondents at 94.9% (94) say that the message of the online retailer across different channels do influence the perception of the respondents on the brand. Meanwhile, 5.1% (5) of the respondents say that it doesn't influence their perception of the brand.

Table 8: Responses for Impact on Purchase Decisions Question 1

To what extent do digital marketing efforts influence your final purchase decisions?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Extremely Influential)	22	22%
4 (Very Influential)	41	41%
3 (Influential)	27	27%
2 (Less Influential)	5	5%
1 (Not Very Influential)	4	4%
0 (Not Influential at All)	1	1%

Table 9: Responses for Impact on Purchase Decisions Question 2

How likely are you to make a purchase from an online retailer based on a recommendation from a digital marketing campaign?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Very Likely)	20	20%
4 (Likely)	44	44%
3 (Neutral)	29	29%
2 (Unlikely)	7	7%
1 (Very Unlikely)	0	0%

Tables 8 and 9 shows the responses on the Impact on Purchase Decisions section of the survey questionnaire.

Table 8 depicts the extent of how digital marketing efforts affect the respondents' final purchase decisions. Majority of the respondents say that digital marketing efforts do influence their final purchase decisions. 41% (41) of the respondents say that it is very influential, with it being the most common response. The next most common response, with 27% (27) of the responses, is that digital marketing is influential in making final purchase decisions. It is then followed by 22% (22) of the respondents

saying that it is extremely influential. However, a few of the respondents say that it is not influential at 10% (10) collective responses.

Table 9 indicates the likelihood of the respondents to make a purchase from an online retailer based on a recommendation from a digital marketing campaign. The most common response, with 44% (44) of the responses, say that they are likely to make a purchase. Meanwhile, 29% (29) of the respondents say that they are neutral into making purchases based on a recommendation from a digital marketing campaign. This is then followed by 20% (20) of the respondents saying that they are very likely to make purchase decisions based on a recommendation from a digital marketing campaign, with 7% (7) of the respondents saying that they are unlikely to make purchase decisions. Notably, none of the respondents say that they are very unlikely to make purchase decisions based on a recommendation from a digital marketing campaign.

Table 10: Responses for Satisfaction Measurement Question 1

How satisfied are you with the transparency of online retailers in providing information about the impact of their digital marketing efforts?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
5 (Extremely Satisfied)	16	16%
4 (Very Satisfied)	43	43%
3 (Satisfied)	34	34%
2 (Less Satisfied)	4	4%
1 (Not Very Satisfied)	3	3%
0 (Not Satisfied at All)	0	0%

Table 5: Responses for Satisfaction Measurement Question 2

Have you ever refrained from making a purchase due to concerns about the trustworthiness of an online retailer's digital marketing practices?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	87	87%
No	13	13%

Tables 10 and 11 shows the responses on the Satisfaction Measurement section of the survey questionnaire.

Table 10 illustrates the satisfaction of the respondents with the transparency of online retailers in providing information about the impact of their digital marketing efforts. Most of the respondents say that they are very satisfied with the transparency of online retailers with 43% (43) of the responses. The next most common response, with 34% (34) of the responses, is that they are satisfied. This is followed by 16% (16) of the respondents saying that they are extremely satisfied. Meanwhile, 7% (7) of the respondents say that they are not satisfied with the transparency of online retailers in providing information about the impact of their digital marketing efforts.

Table 11 describes if the respondents have ever refrained from making a purchase due to concerns about the trustworthiness of an online retailer's digital marketing practices. The majority, with 87% (87) of the respondents say that they have refrained from making a purchase. However, 13% (13) of the respondents say that they have not refrained from making a purchase due to concerns about the trustworthiness of an online retailer's digital marketing practices.

5. CONCLUSION

The impact of digital marketing on customer behavior was measured in five (5) different sections: Digital Marketing Awareness, Factors Affecting Customer Engagement, Omnichannel Experience, Impact on Purchase Decisions, and Satisfaction Measurement. In the first section, the respondents are aware of the marketing efforts digitally done by online retailers, and they are made aware through Social Media. Additionally, the respondents say that Social Media have the most influence on buying choices. In the second section, almost all of the respondents perceive personalizing content as important in influencing engagement with online retailers.

Moreover, an overall higher engagement was observed due to the presence of personalized marketing content. Furthermore, it is also important to consider the trustworthiness and credibility of an online retailer. In the third section, it is common to use multiple channels in a

single purchase journey. This indicates that different channels are being used when trying to make a purchase. Along with this, the consistency of the online retailer's message across different channels influence the respondents' perception of the brand is deemed to be important. In the fourth section, digital marketing efforts are influential in making final purchase decisions. In addition, recommendations from a digital marketing campaign makes online customers more likely to purchase from an online retailer. In the last section, online customers are satisfied with the transparency of online retailers in providing information about the impact of their digital marketing efforts. Moreover, online customers have refrained from making a purchase due to concerns about the trustworthiness of an online retailer's digital marketing practices.

Overall, the impact of digital marketing on customer behavior measured in five (5) different sections showed positive effects. It can be concluded that digital marketing campaigns done by online retailers have a significant impact on customer behavior in terms of purchase decisions. There are also different platforms that online retailers can use to perform their digital marketing campaigns that customers will be inclined to engage more with them.

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