

IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION – A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

***Ayush G K ** Dr. Jagadeesh B.**

*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Mangalore University, Mangalagangothri & Assistant Professor,
School of Business & Management, St Aloysius (Deemed to be University)

**Associate Professor & Research Guide, Department of Commerce, University College, Hampankatta, Mangaluru

Abstract

Digital marketing has become a powerful force in shaping consumer buying decisions, influencing every stage of the decision-making process from initial awareness to post-purchase behavior. This review of literature reveals the significant impact of various digital marketing channels on how consumers gather information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing choices. Key factors such as personalization, social proof, and user experience enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, driving consumer engagement and increasing sales.

Keywords: [Digital Marketing, Consumer Buying Decision, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Email Marketing, Retargeting, Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)]

INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing has developed as a commanding influence on consumer purchasing choices. Studies have recurrently confirmed that digital marketing plays a vital role in every stage of the consumer decision-making process, from the initial stage of awareness to behaviour after a buying. It has a deep and varied effect on how consumers make purchasing decisions, affecting the way they gather information, evaluate alternatives, and ultimately choose on purchases. Different digital platforms affect various stages of this process. In general, digital marketing boosts consumer engagement, forms their preferences, and increases sales, particularly when strategies are tailored to align with consumer requirements and behaviours.

The digital marketing landscape has transformed the consumer buying decision process, creating a dynamic interaction between businesses and consumers (Rathnayaka, 2018). Digital marketing's ability to generate value for organizations and improve customer engagement through electronic services has been instrumental in this move (Theodoridis & Gkikas, 2019). The omnipresence of digital technologies has not only altered marketing strategies but has also profoundly impacted consumer preferences and behaviors ("International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE)," 2019). Modern marketing

now supports business innovations far beyond traditional definitions, impacting how marketing is conducted (Storbacka & Moser, 2020). Digital marketing, encompassing interactive technologies like email, websites, social networks, and mobile communications, facilitates direct connections between buyers and sellers in a timely, cost-effective, and personalized manner (Rathnayaka, 2018). The rise of the internet has transformed consumer behavior and traditional marketing strategies, making it crucial for businesses to embrace the digital marketplace (Grubor & Jakša, 2017). Technological advancements are reshaping marketing by providing tools for personalization, customer engagement, and data analytics (Hamdani et al., 2022). New technologies have spurred marketing innovations, leading to novel approaches in product development, pricing, distribution, and promotion (Gündüzyeli, 2024; Oliveira & Júnior, 2022). Businesses now use digital platforms, data analytics, and artificial intelligence to redefine customer experiences and create new business models (Kumar et al., 2024). Consumers now navigate an increasing number of digital touchpoints in their purchasing journeys, making it essential for businesses to understand and optimize these interactions (Verhoef et al., 2019).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a systematic literature review methodology to critically examine, synthesize, and provide an overview of existing research on the impact of digital marketing on the consumer buying decision process. The objective is to identify key themes, theoretical frameworks, research gaps, and emerging trends within the scholarly discourse, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This approach ensures transparency, reproducibility, and minimizes bias in the selection and analysis of sources.

The search strategy involved a comprehensive exploration of academic databases, including [e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, Google Scholar, JSTOR]. A combination of keywords and Boolean operators was utilized to maximize the retrieval of relevant articles. The primary keywords and Boolean search query used were: ("Digital Marketing Communication" OR "Digital Marketing Communications" OR "Digital Marketing" OR "Online Marketing" OR "Internet Marketing" OR "Web Marketing" OR "Social Media Marketing" OR "Search Engine Marketing" OR "Email Marketing" OR "Mobile Marketing" OR "Content Marketing" OR "Digital Advertising" OR "Online Advertising" OR "Digital Media Marketing") AND ("Consumer Buying Decision Process" OR "Consumer Buying Process" OR "Consumer Decision-Making Process" OR "Consumer Purchase Process" OR "Consumer Purchase Decision Process" OR "Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process" OR "Customer Buying Journey" OR "Consumer Purchase Behavior" OR "Customer Purchase Journey" OR "Customer Decision Journey" OR "Buying Decision Process" OR "Consumer Behavior" OR "Customer Buying Decision"). The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and reputable books published between 2016 and 2025. Inclusion criteria focused on studies directly addressing the relationship between digital marketing communication and the consumer buying

decision process, while exclusion criteria included [e.g., non-peer-reviewed sources, articles not available in English, irrelevant topics]. Initial screening involved reviewing titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review of potentially relevant articles.

The extracted data was then analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This involved iteratively reading through the gathered information to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and relationships. These emergent themes were then categorized and synthesized to construct a coherent narrative that addresses the overarching research questions of this literature review, highlights significant contributions, and identifies areas for future research.

Key Digital Marketing Channels and Their Effects Social-Media & eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth)

Social media platforms and eWOM significantly impact consumer decisions by providing reviews, peer opinions, and influencer endorsements, which increase trust and engagement with brands (Kurdi et al., 2022; Jeyakumar & Saravanan, 2023; Antczak, 2024; Nayak & P, 2024). Social media marketing is particularly effective in the evaluation and decision-making stages of the buying process (Kurdi et al., 2022; Antczak, 2024; Nayak & P, 2024).

Search Engine and Online Advertising

Search engine marketing and online ads help consumers discover and research products, positively influencing their purchase intent (Kurdi et al., 2022; Aslinda et al., 2023). These channels are effective in reaching consumers at the information search and evaluation stages (Kurdi et al., 2022; Aslinda et al., 2023).

Email Marketing

The impact of email marketing is mixed; while it can positively influence post-purchase engagement and information research, it may have a negative or limited effect on the actual purchase decision, especially if perceived as spam or overwhelming (Omar & Atteya, 2020; Aslinda et al., 2023).

Retargeting and Personalization

Retargeting strategies (ads shown to users who have previously interacted with a product) are highly influential during the evaluation stage, nudging consumers closer to purchase (Omar & Atteya, 2020; Samundeeswari & Gokulavani, 2025).

INFLUENCE ACROSS DECISION STAGES

Information Search & Evaluation: Digital platforms like search engines, social media, and retargeting play a crucial role during the stages of information search and evaluation. They assist consumers in comparing products, reading reviews, and shaping their preferences (Omar & Atteya, 2020; Kurdi et al., 2022; Jeyakumar &

Saravanan, 2023; Pires et al., 2022; Antczak, 2024).

Purchase Decision: The influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions differs depending on the channel used. For instance, strategies like retargeting and social media marketing can enhance the likelihood of a purchase, while email marketing might have a neutral or even adverse impact in certain situations (Omar & Atteya, 2020; Aslinda et al., 2023; Omar & Atteya, 2022).

Post-purchase: Email marketing can positively affect post-purchase engagement, encourage repeat purchases, and foster loyalty (Omar and Atteya, 2020).

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DIFFERENT DIGITAL CHANNELS

Table 1: Showing Effectiveness of the Different Digital Channels

Digital Channel	Impact on Buying Decision Process	Citations
Search Engine Marketing	Positive, especially in information and evaluation	(Aslinda et al., 2023; Kurdi et al., 2022; Pires et al., 2022)
Social Media Marketing	Positive, boosts engagement and purchase intent	(Aslinda et al., 2023; Kurdi et al., 2022; Jeyakumar & Saravanan, 2023; Antczak, 2024)
Email Marketing	Mixed/Negative during purchase, positive post-purchase	(Omar & Atteya, 2020; Aslinda et al., 2023; Kurdi et al., 2022)
Retargeting	Strong influence in evaluation and purchase stages	(Omar & Atteya, 2020; Kurdi et al., 2022)
Mobile Marketing	Can have a negative impact in some markets	(Omar & Atteya, 2020)

KEY FACTORS ENHANCING IMPACT

Personalization and Social Proof: Tailored content and user reviews increase trust and conversion rates (Jeyakumar & Saravanan, 2023; Antczak, 2024).

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM): Online reviews and recommendations amplify the effects of digital marketing channels (Kurdi et al., 2022; Antczak, 2024).

User Experience: Easy navigation and relevant content on digital platforms improve consumer engagement and decision-making (Jeyakumar & Saravanan, 2023; Pires et al., 2022).

FINDINGS

- Digital marketing plays a vital role in all stages of the consumer buying decision process.
- Different digital platforms impact various stages of the consumer buying decision process.
- Social media and eWOM influence consumer decisions by providing reviews, peer opinions, and influencer endorsements.
- Search engine marketing and online advertising help consumers discover and research products.
- Email marketing has a mixed impact; it can positively

influence post-purchase engagement but may have a negative or limited effect on the actual purchase decision.

- Retargeting strategies are influential during the evaluation stage, encouraging consumers to make a purchase.
- Personalization and social proof, such as tailored content and user reviews, increase trust and conversion rates.
- Easy navigation and relevant content improve consumer engagement and decision-making.
- The effectiveness of digital marketing is enhanced by personalization, social proof, and the integration of multiple digital channels.

SUGGESTIONS

Strategic Channel Allocation: Businesses should strategically allocate their digital marketing efforts across various channels, recognizing the unique impact each has on different stages of the consumer buying journey. Specifically, invest heavily in search engine marketing and social media marketing to maximize impact on information search, evaluation, and purchase intent.

Personalization is Key: Implement personalization strategies to enhance user engagement and increase conversion rates. Tailoring content to individual consumer preferences can significantly improve the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.

Leverage Social Proof: Utilize social proof elements such as customer reviews, ratings, and testimonials to build trust and credibility. Encourage and showcase user-generated content to amplify the positive influence of eWOM.

Optimize User Experience: Prioritize user experience on digital platforms by ensuring easy navigation, intuitive design, and relevant content. A seamless and enjoyable online experience can facilitate smoother decision-making and increase customer satisfaction.

Integrated Approach: Adopt an integrated approach to digital marketing, combining various channels to create

a cohesive and comprehensive strategy. Consistent messaging and branding across platforms can reinforce brand awareness and enhance the overall impact on consumer buying decisions.

Refine Email Marketing: Refine email marketing strategies to focus on post-purchase engagement and customer retention. While email may have limited impact on initial purchase decisions, it is valuable for nurturing customer relationships, promoting repeat business, and fostering loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

Digital marketing is a powerful driver of consumer buying decisions, influencing every stage from awareness to post-purchase, especially, when leveraging the right channels at the right stages. Search engines, social media, and retargeting are particularly effective, while personalization and user-generated content further enhance their impact. Its effectiveness is enhanced by personalization, social proof, and the integration of multiple digital channels, making it essential for businesses that aim to engage and convert modern consumers. Businesses that adapt their digital strategies to consumer preferences expect greater engagement and increased sales.

REFERENCES

- Antczak, B. (2024). Influence of Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior, *Journal of Modern Science*. <https://doi.org/10.13166/jms/189429>
- Aslinda, N., Seman, A., Segar, V. (2023). The Impact of Digital Marketing Channels on Consumer Buying Decision, *Journal of International Business, Economics and Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.24191/jibe.v8i1.23145>
- Figueiredo, N., Ferreira, B., Abrantes, J., & Martinez, L. (2025). The Role of Digital Marketing in Online Shopping: A Bibliometric Analysis for Decoding Consumer Behavior, *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer20010025>

- Jeyakumar, J., & Saravanan, P. (2023). Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour, *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsem18894>
- Kurdi, B., Alshurideh, M., Akour, I., Alzoubi, H., Obeidat, B., & AlHamad, A. (2022). The role of digital marketing channels on consumer buying decisions through eWOM in the Jordanian markets, *International Journal of Data and Network Science*. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.7.002>
- Mehmeti-Bajrami, S., Qerimi, F., & Qerimi, A. (2022). The Impact of Digital Marketing vs. Traditional Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior, *HighTech and Innovation Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.28991/hij-2022-03-03-08>
- Nayak, P., & P, R. (2024). A Study On The Impact Of Digital Marketing On Consumer Buying Behaviour, *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i04.26558>
- Omar, A., & Atteya, N. (2020). The Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Buying Decision Process in the Egyptian Market, *International Journal of Business and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v15n7p120>
- Pires, P., Santos, J., Brito, P., & Marques, D. (2022). Connecting Digital Channels to Consumers' Purchase Decision-Making Process in Online Stores, *Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114392>
- Samundeeswari, S., & Gokulavani, M. (2025). Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour, *International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.70333/ijeks-04-01-s-005>
- Stephen, A. (2016). The role of digital and social media marketing in consumer behavior, *Current opinion in psychology*, 10, 17-21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.COPSYC.2015.10.016>
- Jain, S., & Pandey, A. (2020). Study of Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behaviour, *Journal of emerging technologies and innovative research*.
- Iqbal, A., Khan, S., Abbasi, M., Ismail, F., & Khan, J. (2024). The Digital Echo: The Influence of Digital Marketing Channels on Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Decisions, *Research Journal for Societal Issues*.
- Kaur, K. (2023). The Influence of Digital and Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour. *Agora International Journal of Economical Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.15837/aijes.v17i1.5760>
- Pandey, P., Kumari, M., Ganie, J., & Student, Y. (2024). Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour, *International Journal for Multidimensional Research Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.61877/ijmrp.v2i4.127>
- Rathnayaka, U.S. (2018). Role of Digital Marketing in Retail Fashion Industry: A Synthesis of the Theory and the Practice, *Journal of Accounting & Marketing*, 7, 1-7.
- Theodoridis, P.K. and Gkikas, D.C. (2019) How Artificial Intelligence Affects Digital Marketing. In: Kavoura, A., Kefallonitis, E. and Giovanis, A., Eds., *Strategic Innovative Marketing and Tourism*, Springer International Publishing, 1319-1327. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12453-3_151
- Verhoef, P. C., & Bijmolt, T. H. A. (2019). Marketing perspectives on digital business models: A framework and overview of the special issue, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 36(3), 341-349. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2019.08.001>