

Digital Marketing: A Survey Account of the Ongoing Evolution

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Abstract: *The technological revolution in the past decades has its major impact in digitalising the goods and services market. It has not only challenged the traditional market theories but has opened up vistas of channels of revolutionary spirals in marketing. While digitalised markets have all the advantages of a wide market, anytime access, variety and range of choice, time savings etc , it also has the disadvantage of fake sellers and consumers who do not have direct communications with each other as they are connected by media and agents. Over that the whole process requires the knowledge of media and their availability through the internet. As there is a huge vacuum in this area due to the lack of computer literacy among the general mass as well as the connectivity through internet in the country , the system still reach out of accessibility of a large part of the overall market. Also the adoption of digital market is not only low but rate of spread is small because of the required skill to operate them even at the basic level. However the revolutionary spread of smart phones with net connectivity have brought a change in the acceptance of such marketing at the root level population.*

Keywords: Connectivity, Digital, Internet, Marketing

1. Introduction

The technological revolution in the past decades has its major impact in digitalising the goods and services market. It has not only challenged the traditional market theories but has opened up vistas of channels of revolutionary spirals in marketing.

Digital marketing refers to the ways of marketing the products and services through digitalised channels including but not exclusive to the use of internet. Along with internet it includes channels like mobile services, marketing through social media, display publicity, marketing via search engine, etc. Thus it engulfs all channels of digitalised media.

However while digitalisation has all the advantages of a wide spread market, it does also has the disadvantages of no direct interaction with actual seller. The medium are always hired agents and more digitalised the market, more is the gap of communication between actual consumers and the producers of the products and services.

This paper is aimed at examining the pros and cons of the digitalised world of marketing from both the consumers and producers point of view. This paper has been divided into 3 sections, section-I gives the introduction, objectives and provides hypothesis of the study, section-II provides the review of literature and section-III deals with methodology and findings, and finally gives the conclusion and policy suggestions.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To find the reach of digital marketing among the local unorganised market.
- 2) To examine the advantage and disadvantage of digital marketing from both the producers or sellers and consumers perspective.
- 3) To analyse if the switch over or transformation from traditional to a digitalised world of marketing is voluntary or forced among the users.

Hypothesis of the Study

- 1) That the unorganised sellers are more comfortable with the non-digitalised way of selling the product.
- 2) That the consumers prefer more of in-person purchase of the products and services.
- 3) That digitalised marketing is voluntary chosen by the seller or producers in the local market.
- 4) That digitalisation has increased the scope of buying and selling among the buyers and the sellers.

2. Review of Literature

Digital marketing has almost become an essential part of all organisation, small or large so as to reach far and wide consumers, through devices like laptops, digital billboards, search engine optimisation (SEO), e-mail, etc. However the actual impact all at once but would be gradually realised. (Yasmin,Tasneem and Fatema ,2015)

Digital marketing in the present era is one of the real time marketing unit, which has gained momentum by using networking and electronics media as a platform. It takes place by the help of different channels of internet like text, mobile, apps, electronic billboards, digital television, etc.

With rise in the digital marketing consumer's can be access any time and are directly exposed to market. They have well hand knowledge about the brand and companies, which they are using. Also communication between consumers and retailers is direct.

Consumer's have the anticipation and the knowledge about the market price rate. It strengthens the bond between consumer's and retailers. It increases loyalty for the marketing, this expands the size of marketing. It helps in capturing new consumer's and market, which provide boost for the production market.

Even though there are certain challenges like Consumer's have maximum alternate to switch product instantly. They

can bargain for any new price rate, which may lead to profit or loss. They have the option to reject the product at the last moment. Knowledge about the use of apps is not known to everybody. It is inaccurate to judge the actual consumer's and fake consumer's. Sometime infinite period of network block and other technical problem in the media can affect the marketing. Effective information transformation is also required.

A study on the perception of the professionals towards digitalised marketing has been done in Pakistan (Khan & Siddique,) finds that in spite of the spread of digital marketing, it has still not gained full acceptance and the professionals remains skeptical towards it being concerned about the breach of privacy, misleading information, etc. However (Merisavo,2006) finds an increase in the consumer's loyalty and commitments due to more frequent communication and ease of intuition, via digital marketing communication through channels like mobile phones, internet, etc.

3. Methodology and Findings

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The source of secondary data are those available in the existing publishing journals both online and print wheels are taken to highlight the spread of the digital market. The primary data has been collected through structured questionnaires from the study area. The study area is the local market of the city of Cuttack. The selection of the study area is deliberate as the city is gradually been developed into a 'SMART CITY'. This has lead to a revolutionary rightward shifting of the demand curve of the consumers in general with increased demand for goods and services. With rapid urbanisation, the city has evidenced a spread of sophisticated malls like Big Bazaar, Reliance Fresh , etc ; not only spreading availability of products and services at competitive rate, but also inducing demand through easy spread of information among the consumers via digitalisation. However the city also has the existence of a large scale unorganised sellers which are

been subject to voluntary or involuntary competition in the evolving digital market. The study collects information regarding those issues directly from variant sellers on one hand as well as the consumers on the other hand , it is to throw light on the existing scenario of this transformation into a digital world of marketing. The information is collected by the investigator directly through face to face interviews. The study has tried to lessen the bias through building a good rapport with the respondents and getting the information very informally about this actual market behaviour. The data has been analyses through relevant statistical and economical tools as per requirement.

This study makes an attempt to find the spread of digitalisation in the study area. The digitalising process among the suppliers refers to the use of digitalised weighing machines, computerised system of maintenance of the database, generation of e-bills etc. Also assessment was made of whether they go for publicity of their products and services. And if yes, then the medium of advertisement they chose from.

Table 1 shows the extent of digitalisation among the sellers in the study area. It clearly reflects that overall the sellers have adopted some form of digitalisation in their marketing process in the form of e-weighing, e-bills etc. While its adoption can be known from the fact 66.67 percentage of the surveyed population showed its use in one form or the other but the matter to be marked is the overall process is not digitalised. While overall around 34% of the population has still not adopted any form of digitalise marketing , even among those who have adopted have not gone for complete digitalisation where not only the products can be correctly weighed but also provided with a valid e-bills for the consumers making the overall system very transparent. The main reason observed here was the prevalence of a large scales small unorganised producers and sellers either in sole proprietorship or partnership but reluctant to take up the change under the pretext (real or apparent) of the cost of adoption, being subject to taxation on transparency etc.

Table 1: Extent of Digitalisation among the sellers

Type of organisation	Percentage of the total	Whether Digitalised		If Yes, Instruments of digitalisation		
		Yes	No	Digital Weighing machines	Computerised units	More than one system
Sole Proprietorship	50	80	20	50	50	0
Partnership	30	33.3	66.67	0	33.3	0
Co-operative	20	100	0	50	50	0

Source: Primary survey

This fact was further investigated by segregating the market in terms of the types of product as is reflected in Table 2. It shows that while in case of sole proprietorship businesses the vegetable and textiles markets showed the maximum adoption and less for the grocery market, it has no presence in the stationary shops. But in case of partnership, while only 33.37% showed the adoption of some form of digitalisation, of which it was found to be only in the textile and stationeries in the form of providing e-bills to its consumers. However, in case of vegetables and groceries , they were found to be adverse to the e-weighing machines telling they are not required as they can handle the task themselves.

Table 2: Extent of Digitalisation According to the Type of Product Sold

Type of organisation	Type of product sold			
	Vegetables	Groceries	Textile	Stationeries
Sole Proprietorship	20	10	20	0
Partnership	0	0	20	10
Co-operative	0	10	0	10

Source: Primary survey

Publicity of the products and services have become an inescapable part of the marketing strategy of the producers and sellers in this era of consumerism where the consumers have assumed utmost importance. Table 3 clearly reflects that almost all forms of the business surveyed went for some

form of advertisement of its product. Except for a small segment of the sole proprietorship business who did not feel the need of any form of publicity, it was found to be adopted among all the other sellers. However the actual adoption of digitalisation is revealed from the medium of publicity adopted by these sellers. Only 40% of the overall sole proprietors and 33.37% of the partnership businesses who advertise their products were found to adopt digital media like internet, social media sites like WhatsApp etc to spread the market of their product while in case of co-operatives

which was mainly government undertakings in this area showed 100% adopting of these mediums. Majority of the players in this market still depends on non-digital ways of marketing like newspapers, displays through models, pamphlets, hoardings etc. This form of publicity can only help in capturing the local markets but its reach would be obvious less than the digitalised marketing strategies. This fact can be easily communicated from table 4 which reflects the response of the sellers with regard to the effect of digitalised marketing on their overall volume of sell.

Table 3 Medium of publicity according to the type of organisation

Type of organisation	Whether publicises the products		If yes, the type of publicising medium					
	yes	no	Digital media	Newspapers	Display	Pamphlets	Hoardings	None
Sole Proprietorship	80	20	40	40	100	0	40	0
Partnership	100	0	33.3	0	100	66.67	100	0
Co-operative	100	0	100	0	100	10	10	0

Source: Primary survey

All the users of digitalised marketing have shown acceptance to the fact their earnings have increased over the years with their adoption of digitalised marketing ways. Though the reasons varies for their adoption, the underlying reasons were found to be wider market for their products/services. This becomes more important in case of

saturation in the local markets due to large number of competitive producers. The other reasons were found to be less effort required to be put due to capitalisation of some works, better communication, more attention to the consumers etc.

Table 4: Benefits of Digitalisation of Publicity

Type of organisation	If digitalisation has benefitted your business		If yes, what type of benefits		
	yes	no	Wider market	Less effort	Any other(specify)
Sole Proprietorship	80	20	100	100	Less use of manpower
Partnership	33.37	66.67	100	100	Better communication
Co-operative	100	0	100	100	Better communication, quicker services etc.

Source: Primary survey

Table 5 helps to throw some light on the extent of acceptance of the consumers to the digitalisation process and the benefits they perceive as the consumers of the products and the services. 70% of the consumers prefer digitalised shops rather than manual services. Segregated by the type of market, there appears to be more bias of the consumers for digitalised textile market, followed by the vegetables and the stationary products.

products they get to chose from sitting at the comfort zone of their homes. This was found to be among all the consumers in favour of digitalised marketing irrespective of the age-group.

Table 5: Influence of Digitalised market on the consumers

Do you deliberately go to digitalised shops		If Yes, the type of shop they prefer digitalised services			
Yes	No	vegetables	Stationaries	Textiles	others
70%	30%	40%	30%	70%	-

Source: Primary survey

The consumers were found to be benefitted by the digitalised process (80%, as shown in Table 6), 20% of the consumers were either neutral or feel not benefitted by the process. The preference of the consumers towards the digitalised market system was found to be due to several reasons ranging from more reliable products, quickly accessible e-services like billing, getting information etc. The most stated reason for digitalised shopping was found to be the consumers satisfaction due to the wide range of

However among the percentage of people who were found not to be in favour of this changing scenario, most of them were found not to be tech-savvy and many of them even did not know the operation of the gadgets like computers, smart phones, tablets etc. Even if some of them managed to operate the gadgets, they did not know the way to access the internet. Many of the consumers were also found to be against the process being upset with the quality of the product they got through online marketing. Either they did not know the way to return back the product they were dissatisfied with but also because of the clumsy procedure to reverse back the orders. Many of them therefore remained neutral with a decision of not accessing the online marketing after feeling being resentful. Though they constitute a meagre percentage of the people compared to those who were in favour of digitalised markets, yet it is to be remembered that the country in general and the area of study in particular still is far behind in providing the internet facilities to all as well as the computer literacy to even those who have the good fortune to get the net facilities.

Table 6: Consumers' Assessment of Digitalisation

Are you benefitted by this process of digitalisation?			If yes, what benefits?			If No, state the reasons
yes	No	Neutral	More reliable	e-services like bills, display etc.	Wider range	
80%	10%	10%	70%	60%	80%	1. Anything will do, not concerned. 2. Don't know to operate computer or access net. 3. Bad quality in online shopping. Very clumsy procedures etc.

Source: Primary survey

4. Conclusions

Thus it can be seen that digital marketing has become an inseparable part of the marketing strategies for any organisation to remain competitive in the vast spreading horizon of market opportunities and also to find foothold in case of local market saturation. However the study finds a huge gap between the digitalised market and the unorganised non-digitalised market. The adoption of this revolutionary scheme of marketing is still low in the study area but however in the coming years there is vast scope of its spread due to the increased connectivity through easy to handle smart phones. Due to low computer literacy mainly among the aging population, it this mobile connectivity and use which would help in changing the mindset and adoption of digitalised marketing in the future years.

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