Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behavior in Pokhara

Baburam Lamichhane
Lecturer, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara
baburamlamichhane039@gmail.com

Abstract

In this era of digitization, where everything is just a click away from us, marketing has evolved a lot. With the increased use of technology, smartphones, the producers of goods, can now reach consumers all over the globe. Thus, reaching out to consumers through the internet is digital marketing. Digital marketing, therefore, has an incredible influence on people's interaction, work, purchases, and life habits. It is cost-effective too on the parts of the sellers and buyers. Thus, the present study examines the effectiveness and impact of digital marketing on the consumers' behaviour in Pokhara city. The questionnaires were administered based on the purposive sampling method and obtained data from the respondents in Pokhara city. One hundred seventy-two questionnaires were distributed, and 150 available samples were collected, except incomplete questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 87.2 percent for all who chose to participate. Findings indicate that e-mail has a profoundly negative influence on consumer behaviour. Mobile, as a digital marketing channel, harms consumer behaviour. Social media marketing, SEO, and SEM affect consumer behaviour. Social media marketing is the most influential variable in consumer behaviour. We notice that the most significant effect on the consumer decision is in the evaluation stage. This can be due to the social media marketing and SEO and SEM channel directed to the consumer who has already been searching for the product.

Keywords: *Consumer behavior, digital Marketing, e-mail, SEO and SEM, social media*

1. Introduction

Digital marketing refers to the delivery of information or advertisement through various digital channels such as social media, e-mail, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and mobile marketing. It is the process of marketing with the use of several digital tools and mediums. E-mail marketing involves providing customized or targeted messages to specific individuals to meet users' requirements (Scharl, Dickinger, & Murphy, 2005). E-mail marketing is one of the digital marketing tools used by marketers as a means of communication or promotional messages to connect viewers and customers. It is the term often specified to the transmission of e-mail messages by the business person to enlighten its link with the current customers or clients to improve customers' loyalty. It also allows the business to get new clients or significant clients to buy something immediately (VanBoskrik, Overby, & Takvorian, 2011). So e-mail plays an essential role in deliver messages and enhancing customers' loyalty toward products.

The development of technology and enhancement on the internet in today's era has got digital platforms at their peak. On the contrary, business houses and marketers use

it for digital marketing resolution. With the concept of going green and the advancement of technology, traditional marketing or paper marketing is on the border of extinction. Mobile marketing allows businesses to interrelate with their customers directly, despite time or space barriers. The exponential development of electronic technology has given us smartphones and smart devices, which have now emerged as digital marketing tools. Globally digital marketing has been approved at its best by every business house. Likewise, developing nations like Nepal are evolving into digital platforms. The various Digital Marketing companies in Nepal have begun to explore the massive possibilities of digital marketing tools and techniques in Nepal.

When it comes to developing nations like Nepal, there is excellent scope for digital marketing. Analyzing the current situation and the rise in the use of internet users, there is a significant rise in the use of digital marketing tools by the greatest of business houses. Big businesses have previously turned themselves into digital marketing, whereas; small firms are gradually adopting and including digital marketing tools and techniques as their marketing strategy.

Digital marketing help business houses reach the targeted consumer. It helps them to get insights about the customer. It is less expensive than traditional marketing as it directly affects the target group. It helps business fanalyze consumers' behaviour using various logical digital marketing tools. Social media or digital media is a tool to provide customers with time and location-sensitive customized information that promotes product services and ideas, thereby creating value for the stakeholders and customers (Dickingeer, Haghirian, Murphy, & Scharl, 2004). Though approximately 34 percent of the population use internet in Nepal,

the number of users is significantly increasing. Since Nepal is on the verge of complete digitalization, the future of digital marketing is evident and bright. Big business houses of Nepal invest around NPR 3 million on digital marketing business annually as associated with NPR 5 lakhs a few years ago. Search engine marketing is those rights bought by marketers or business firms that appear as text ads on-screen of different search engines next to the results when users type in keywords. Marketers also use search engine optimization, which helps to elevate a client's website in the listing when computer users search for a subject or topic (Elliott, 2006). Search engine marketing allows marketers search for different desired products for advertisements on search engines' screens.

Consumers look for information that not only fulfill their needs and solve their problems but also the options that can offer extra insights concerning the products or services. There are various alternatives available for purchase and an important reason to decide on the purchase of the selected products or services. Consumers use the data offered at their fingertips in the digital era. Kotler and Keller (2012) argued the classical decision-making model, "Five-stage customer buying process model", consists of consumer behaviour supported by their needs. Need recognition leads a consumer to buy a product. It is a source of purchasing behaviour. An increase in buying behaviour will lead the consumer to pursue information and search all the possible sources of information. After collecting data, they estimate all possible alternatives. The consumer then decides to purchase one of the alternatives with certain criteria. They buys the most attractive option among others. Though the consumer buys the product, there is no guarantee of complete satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Consumers make their purchases or implement purchasing decisions after receiving extensive

evidence about the product or service online. Consumers access suppliers and producers wide-reaching and information on current market prices (Palos-Sanchez & Saura, 2018).

Business houses are investing in digital marketing tools as the world is moving towards digitization. Consumer behaviour is a subject matter of study for marketers as it helps them analyze its efficacy in the market. Business firms must understand how consumers behave to specific marketing tools and techniques. These digital marketing tools can influence the consumer to act in different ways. In Pokhara use of digital marketing by various businesses, houses are evident, but there is no study of its impact on consumer behaviour, here the study tries to answer the following frequently raised the question of digital marketing (E-mail marketing, Social media marketing, Mobile marketing, and search engine optimization (SEO) And search engine marketing (SEM) marketing) impact on consumers' behaviour in Pokhara Valley. So, the study mainly aims to explore the impact of digital marketing on consumer behaviour in Pokhara city.

2. Literature review and hypothesis formulation

The impact of digitization has been the subject of considerable empirical research in marketing research. With rapid change in information and technology and international marketing, ICT is a tool for promoting and expanding the market beyond the territory of the country. Gujrati, R., & Uygun, H. (2020) examined how digitalization has altered consumer behaviour and shifted consumer perspective from one of fear to one of acceptance. Consumer behaviour has shifted as a result of smartphones and the internet. Not only can people conduct online shopping, but they also access services from anywhere via the internet. Digitalization has played an important role, and it is gradually transforming the consumer's shopping habits from mall to mobile and to buy a product without wasting time or money. Z., et al. (2019) analyzed the behavioural reaction in online shopping and differentiated the way people shop online differs from how they purchase in a physical based on a questionnaire, this study found Price, time savings, and convenience have all been identified as critical influences on internet purchasing behaviour.

A study conducting with consideration of the 5Ds approach of marketing (digital devices, digital platforms, digital media, digital data, and digital technology) by Nagrani & Kumar (2017) confirmed that traditional marketing tactics to come closer to consumers than ever before. Consumers now have a considerably broader selection of entertainment, products, services, and pricing from various sources, as well as easier of picking and purchasing stuff. From the prospective employee marketers working for these companies have the opportunity to grab new skills and apply new techniques to increase the company's competitiveness. Following Ghazie and Dolah (2018) explored the attitudes regarding digital marketing of Malaysian consumers' and discovered the brand of the product supports the high return through online banking. According to the survey, most today's youth have access to digital media, but they are unaware of how to make the most use of it. Sivasankaran (2013) examined the perception of digital marketing among youths in the customer-oriented market environment approach and found that the current generation is more interested in internet shopping than traditional purchasing. Moreover, due to the pressure of the younger generation's purchasing habits, marketers are pushed to create a novel marketing technique because youth's buying behaviour and behavioural patterns have a stronger influence on purchasing behaviour.

As highlighted by Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed (2021) in people's buying behaviour in Jordan, the results demonstrated that digital marketing, such as social media marketing and mobile marketing, has a profound impact on consumer purchasing decisions based on empirical study. Furthermore, findings implied that businesses developing strategies to harness the digital world and technology, as well as raise brand recognition through digital platforms, to remain competitive in today's market. In the case of an online company, Ugonna et al. (2017) examined the influence of efficient online marketing, effective communication, and on-time delivery on the regularity of visits and consumer patronage, and findings revealed that online marketing is a viable marketing communication channel that has a substantial impact on the frequency of online store visits and consumer patronage.

A strategy in customer relationships and attributes of online marketing have been assessed by Hooda & Aggarwal (2012) and noted that there is a considerable variation in age and online trading qualities. Still, it has nothing to do with gender because of security concerns, the majority of respondents are unwilling to purchase products over the internet. Most respondents, regardless of gender or age group (particularly those between the ages of 18 and 30), found e-shopping more convenient time saving and favour credit cards as a convenient means of payment. From the theory of planned behaviour approach, Lodorfos, Trosterud, and Whitworth (2006) indicated that customers' attitudes toward previous e-purchases had a significant impact on their propensity to re-purchase and that consumers' opinions about the significance of trust, security, and convenience in the online environment were highly influenced by their experience with an e-brand. With the line to behavioural marketing, Constantinides (2004) confirmed

that consumers undoubtedly dealing in e-shopping over branded products. Similarly, deliver time, access, quality assurance, post-sales services are a key components in buying decisions in e-shopping.

3. Methodology

This study applied descriptive and analytical research design as a quantitative research method. It is mainly focused on the primary data, collected from the structural questionnaire to respective respondents. The nature of the data will be quantitative. The research's total population or sampling units are the consumers from Pokhara who used digital portals and technology. The full sampling size is 150, chosen purposively for the study from the total population. The technique used for the sampling is purposive sampling among the people of Pokhara city.

The primary data will be collected using the questionnaire. The consumers' behaviour and preferences will be tested by asking them to fill up the questionnaires in Google forms. The data will be processed and analyzed using SPSS version 20, descriptive, and linear regression.

4. Analysis and Results

In this research survey, personnel characteristics of respondents have a very significant role to play in expressing and giving responses about the problem; keeping this in mind, in this study, a set of personal characteristics, namely, age, gender, religion, monthly income, education, or qualifications and occupation of the 150 respondents are examined and presented.

4.1 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive statistics is the term given to the analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way such

Table 1: Impact Position of Email Marketing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You encounter e-mail marketing very often.	150	1.00	5.00	4.33	0.91
E-mail marketing plays an essential role in changing attitudes towards products and services.	150	2.00	5.00	3.61	0.69
It is very informative and helps in making a purchase decision.	150	1.00	5.00	4.08	0.84
It plays an active role in building a relationship between consumers and businesses.	150	1.00	5.00	4.13	0.79
You don't check your e-mails very often and don't pay much attention to e-mail marketing.	150	1.00	5.00	2.77	0.83
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Source: Survey, 2022

that, for example, patterns might emerge from the data. They are simply a way to describe our data.

According to Pimentel (2010), the five-point Likert scale is an interval scale. The mean is very significant. From 1 to 1.8, it means strongly disagree. From 1.81 to 2.6, it means to disagree. From 2.61 to 3.4, it means neutral. From 3.41 to 4.2, it means to agree. From 4.21 to 5, it means strongly agree. In the first statement, the mean is 4.33; hence, the

Table 2: Position of Mobile marketing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You encounter mobile marketing very often.	150	1.00	5.00	4.31	1.00
You show interest in messages disclosing discounts and special offers.	150	1.00	5.00	3.97	0.87
Offers in mobile marketing are attractive and appealing.	150	1.00	5.00	3.81	0.99
You get reliable information from mobile marketing.	150	1.00	5.00	3.22	0.97
You often purchase plans and services in mobile marketing	150	1.00	5.00	2.74	0.79
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Source: Survey, 2022

majority of participants strongly agree that they encounter e-mail marketing very often.

In the second statement, the mean is 3.60. It means that most participants agreed that e-mail marketing plays an essential role in changing attitudes towards products and services. Similarly, the third and fourth statements have a mean value of 4.08 and 4.13 which means that they agree that it is very informative and helps in making a purchase decision, and it plays an active role in building a relationship between consumer and business. In the third statement, the mean is 2.77 which means that most participants are neutral and that they don't check e-mails very often and don't pay much attention to e-mail marketing.

According to Pimentel (2010), the five-point Likert scale is an interval scale. The mean is very significant. From 1 to 1.8, it means strongly disagree. From 1.8 to 2.6, it means to disagree. From 2.61 to 3.4, it means neutral.

From 3.41 to 4.2, it means to agree. From 4.21 to 5, it means strongly agree.

In the first statement, the mean is 4.31; hence, it means that the majority of participants strongly agree that they encounter mobile marketing very often. Similarly, In the second and third statements, the mean is 3.97 and 3.80. It means that most participants agreed that they show interest in messages disclosing discounts and special offers, and offers in mobile marketing are attractive and appealing. In the fourth and fifth ,statements, the mean value is 3.22 and 2.74 which means that most participants aInabout getting reliable informati,on from mobile marketing and purchasing plans and most marketing.

According to Pimentel (2010), the five-point Likert scale is an interval scale. The mean is very significant. From 1 to 1.8, it means strongly disagree. From 1.8 to 2.6, it means to oppose. From 2.61 to 3.4, it means neutral.

Table 3: Position of Social Media Marketing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You encounter social media marketing very often.	150	1.00	5.00	4.43	0.96
It helps you to get information on products you want to acquire.	150	1.00	5.00	4.20	0.80
It influences you to try new brands/products /services.	150	1.00	5.00	3.87	0.70
It draws your attention through attractive feeds and posts.	150	2.00	5.00	4.27	0.78
It is a powerful platform for communicating with companies and other consumers.	150	1.00	5.00	4.24	0.90
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Source: Survey, 2022

From 3.41 to 4.2, it means to agree. From 4.21 to 5, it means strongly agree. In the first, fourth, and fifth statements, the mean is 4.43, 4.27, and 4.2400, respectively. Hence, it means that most participants strongly agree that they encounter social media marketing very often. It draws their attention through attractive feeds and posts, and it is a powerful platform to communicate with companies and other consumers. Similarly, In the second and third statements, the mean is 4.20 and 3.87. It means that it helps them get information on products they want to acquire and also influences them to try new brand products.

Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing

According to Pimentel (2010), the five-point Liker an interval scale. The mean is very significant. From 1 to 1.8, it means strongly disagree. From 1.8 to 2.6, it means to disagree. From 2.61 to 3.4, it means neutral. From 3.41 to 4.2, it means to agree from 4.21 to 5, at the top of the result page, that has media coverage and endorsement.

Similarly, in the second, third, and fifth statements, the mean is 4.17, 4.20, and 3.93. It means that the majority of participants agree that search engine is the most reliable source of information, keywords play an essential role in getting the required information, and they get the results with ratings and reviews, which means they strongly agree. In the first and fourth statements, the mean is 4.28 and 4.45, respectively. Hence, it means that the majority of participants strongly agree that they use search engines very often and they get results

Relationship between Digital Marketing on Consumer Behavior

Correlation is a technique for investigating the relationship between two or more quantitative, continuous variables. Pearson's correlation analysis has been carried out to analyze the degree of association between two or more

Table 4: Position of SEO and SEM

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You use search engines very often	150	1.00	5.00	4.28	1.06
It is the most reliable source of information.	150	1.00	5.00	4.2	0.82
Keywords play an essential role in getting the required information.	150	1.00	5.00	4.20	0.76
You get the results at the top of the result page with media coverage and endorsement.	150	1.00	5.00	4.45	0.87
You get the results with ratings and reviews.	150	1.00	5.00	3.93	0.62
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Source: Survey, 2022

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

	Consumer behaviour	E-mail marketing	Mobile marketing	Social media marketing	SEO and SEM
Consumer behaviour	1				
Email marketing	.531**	1			
Mobile marketing	.591**	.443**	1		
Social media marketing	.782**	.541**	.684**	1	
SEO and SEM	.821**	.626**	.598**	.780**	1

Notes: **. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*
Source: Survey, 2022

variables and to know to what extent variables under study are correlated to each other.

The degree of correlation between e-mail marketing and consumer behaviour is 0.531 (r=0.531), the correlation between mobile marketing and consumer behaviour is 0.591(r=0.591), the correlation between social media marketing and consumer behaviour is 0.782 (r=0.782), and the correlation between SEO and SEM and consumer behaviour is 0.821(r=0.821). It shows a strong positive correlation between these variables. From the above figure, we can also see that SEO and SEM have more highly correlated toward customer satisfaction than other variables.

4.2 Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Behavior

Regression analysis is a quantitative research method used when the study involves modelling and analyzing several variables, where the relationship includes a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. This research uses multiple regression analysis, most commonly used to predict values of a criterion variable based on linear associations with predictor variables.

R shows the correlation between the dependent variable (customer behaviour) and independent variables (Mobile marketing, E-mail marketing, social media marketing, and SEO and SEM). R^2 means the square of correlation. R square is equal to 0.726. It explains that independent variables can predict 72.6 percent of various independent variables. percentages change in customer behaviour can be accounted for by SEO, SEM, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing, and social media marketing, and the remaining 27.40 percentages of customer behaviour will explain by other factors.

Table 7 shows that coefficient value β =-0.006 for e-mail marketing. But significance value is more significant than 0.05, which means that there is no impact of e-mail marketing on consumers' behaviour. The coefficient value β =0.028 for mobile marketing, and the significance value is more significant than 0.05, which indicates that mobile marketing

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate
1	.852[a]	.726	.718	.222

Notes: a. Predictors: (Constant), SEO and SEM, Mobile Marketing, E-mail marketing, Social media marketing

Table 7: Maximum Likelihood Estimates for the Research Model.

Independent variables	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-statistic	P-value
Email marketing	-.006	.060	-0.104	0.917
Mobile marketing	.028	.040	0.699	0.486
Social media marketing	.212	.049	4.363	0.000
SEO and SEM	.344	.049	7.074	0.000

also has no impact on consumer behaviour. The coefficient value β =0.212 for social media marketing, but its significance value is less than 0.05. It means that for every one unit of change in social media marketing, there is a 0.212 unit positive impact on consumer behaviour. Coefficient value β =0.344 for search engine optimization and search engine marketing, and the significant value is less than 0.05, which indicates that with one unit of change in each engine optimization and search engine marketing, there is a 0.028 unit positive impact on consumer behaviour.

5. Discussion

Most respondents strongly agreed that they encountered e-mail market, mobile marketing, social media marketing, SEO, and SEM as the mean was more significant than 4.2. Most respondents strongly agreed that social media marketing attracts them and is also a powerful platform to communicate with customers and sellers as the mean was greater than 4.2. The correlation between e-mail marketing and consumer behavior is 0.531 (r=0.531), the correlation between mobile marketing and consumer behavior is 0.591 (r=0.591), the correlation between social media marketing and consumer behavior is 0.782 (r=0.782), and the correlation between SEO and SEM and consumer behavior is 0.821 (r=0.821). It shows a strong positive correlation between these variables. The significance level in all of them is less than 0.05 (p<0.05), which means

that the relationship is significant between the dependent variable (consumer behavior) and independent variables (Mobile marketing, E-mail marketing, social media marketing, and SEO and SEM). The significance for e-mail marketing (0.917) and mobile marketing (0.486) variables is more than 0.05, so it means that e-mail marketing and mobile marketing do not predict the impact on customer behavior. Significance for social media marketing and SEM and SEO (i.e., 0.000) variable is less than 0.05, so it means that social media marketing and SEM and SEO predict a significant positive impact on customer behavior.

Tandon and Kaur (2018) conducted similar research in India to establish that digital marketing has several positive impacts, such as building a relationship with customers, easy comparison of products, clear information about the products, and so on, which are also very close to the findings of this study. Similarly, lack of trust, an increase in cybercrime, and being highly reliant on the internet are considered challenges in both types of research. Omira and Atteya (2020), accompanied a similar research study in the Egyptian market, found that the impact of digital marketing channels such as e-mail marketing was significant, which is the opposite of the findings of this study conducted in Pokhara. But the impact of mobile marketing was insignificant on the consumers of Egypt, which is similar to the results of this study.

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that digital marketing has a positive and insignificant impact on consumer behaviour. Understanding the psychology of the consumer in the dynamic environment is very important. Digital marketing has brought positive changes in consumer behaviour. The more significant impact of digital marketing can be seen in big cities among the students and working people who lack time due to their busy schedules. It is convenient for them to buy and make payments anywhere.

Social media marketing, search engine marketing, and optimization positively impact consumer behavior. But e-mail marketing and mobile marketing do not affect consumer behavior. It indicates that consumers use these appliances as per needs and viability. The attractive posts and feeds of social media are appealing and pleasing to the customer. The information available from search engine with ratings and reviews are a reliable source of information for consumers: E-mail and mobile marketing harm consumer behaviour as they are not appealing or attractive. Most of the e-mails and messages are ignored by the consumers as they are not interested in them. They do not find it a reliable source of information.

Among all these digital marketing channels, representing the independent variable, social media marketing is the most influential variable on consumer behaviour. It positively impacts need recognition, evaluation process, purchase decision, and post-purchase decision, all of which are part of consumer behaviour.

6. Implication

Based on the major finding and conclusion of the study, the following are the implications of the actions for all the existing as well as upcoming entrepreneurs, startups, business houses, and marketers:

- Perceive the consumer profile of the digital consumer and the way their behaviour has changed. Study the post-purchase decisions as it will help the business change the customer to be loyal to their brand.

- Efforts should be made to make digital marketing safe and trustworthy, so there is an increase in the market size.

- The use of reward systems such as coupons, gift vouchers, discounts, cash backs, etc., should motivate them to use digital channels. Using business analytics tools is essential to study the impacts of digital marketing on consumer behaviour.

- People must be digitally literate to increase the impact of digital marketing fake and inappropriate.

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